



# **PUNK PLANET**

**ISSUE #1**

**MAY/JUNE 1994**

**TWO DOLLARS**

**Music  
Fiction  
Life**

**Samiam**  
**Short Stories**  
**Gravity Records**  
**The Return of Spike Anarkie**  
**Columns**  
**Touch & Go Records**  
**Reviews**  
**You Name It, We Got it!**





Punk Planet is a zine about punk rock, and all that goes with it. What does punk mean? Your guess is as good as ours. We are open to any and all submissions. If you wish to submit something to us, please send it!. We will accept anything (articles, short stories, D.I.Y. info, comics, interviews, scene reports, pictures, anything) that does not, however, mean that all submissions will be printed. Go for quality. A good story will be printed over a bad one, a good interview (one that is interesting and goes beyond the "so what's your favorite tour story") will get priority over a bad one, and so on. We are strictly volunteer run and make no profit what so ever off of this publication. All money made goes back into Punk Planet. We will review any record or zine as long as it is not on a major label (even if the band itself is, but the record is not) and will not be biased as to whether it is punk or not, since we have about as little a clue what that means as you do .

We hope you enjoy this issue, and if not, we encourage you to make your own zine. In fact, we encourage you to make your own zine anyway. -  
The ed.s

# PUNK PLANET

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Fanzines & Records for review go to (yeah, we know it's confusing) by the way, you can send UPS here:

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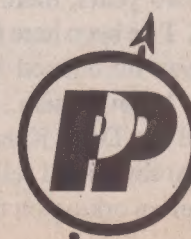
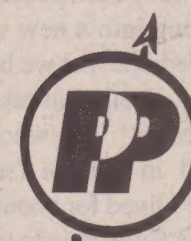
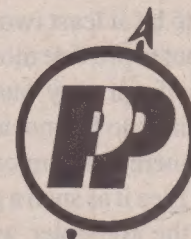
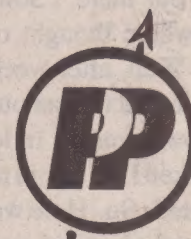
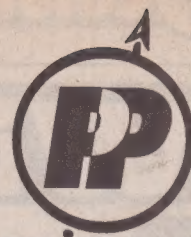
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## **Will Dandy**

Hey there, welcome to Punk Planet. I'm the co-editor here and I thought I'd tell you a little something about the zine and myself before you indulged in the punk rock to follow. This zine started out by people on a nation-wide bulletin board system expressing discontent with policies of other zines out there. Somehow, someone, somewhere thought of doing our own zine. Well, after weeks of indecision I volunteered to lead our journey into the unknown world. In less than a week I had asked Dan to join me as editor and he accepted. So. Here we are. Why? Sure there are plenty of punk rock zines out there. But the truth is that only one is out there on the national level. We want there to be at least two. Not in competition, but to provide more to more people. I myself am very busy in my state of Alabama (no I'm not a hick...there ARE punks here) and am only doing this because I see it as such a great opportunity. With the computer we are able to use resources and have writers that would never have been possible before. We're plunging into a new world so to speak and we hope that we have your support.

Well, that takes care of the introduction. So, who am I? Well, I started in Boston (see....not a hick!) where I lived for about 13 years. Then I went to California to live with my father (the modern divorced family...) and then, after two years, there I moved to Alabama. I've been here for two years now and was introduced to punk the year before I moved here. My friend Kevin played the Dead Kennedys for me for the first time and I fell in love. So now I'm here working on this and two other

zines, a distribution service, a band called "Nihilism", and setting up shows here for touring bands, all the while I maintain good grades at some alternative private school here. I'm busy (as you can tell), but somehow I manage.

Anyways, here at Punk Planet (wherever here is...we're all over) we are against censorship of all forms. The only rule we have here is no major labels or "indie labels" that are just the corporate scum sweeping down on us like a bird of prey. The underground should not be exploited in any way shape or form and we should stick together. That is the main reason that this zine exists anyways: to stomp out the censorship that is going in zines that separates us. I personally have nothing against bands being on major labels. I don't like it, but I think it's there decision. I don't think it makes them unpunk or anything either. I view it as sort of a multi-leveled thing. If you like and/or play punk music, but don't go out and do "punk things", then I think you're punk. For example, I never cared if Samiam did "punk things" before they signed to Atlantic, so why should I care now. I also believe that you can do "punk things" without liking punk music and be punk. For example I think those Zapatista rebels in Mexico have got a pretty damn punk spirit to fight for what's right, but I doubt that many of them like punk music. So, I think you can be punk by music or by actions. If you're both then I guess you're just special. A punk demi-god or something. Not that it really matters, it's just a label people.

It's a label that can be used against someone too. When I first called myself punk in a zine I received death threats (thankfully it turned out to be a joke), got in lots of arguments, received threats of fights,

yelled at from cars. These events are one of the main reasons that I'm here now working my butt off to make this zine a reality. People need to see that there is more to punk than spikes, mohawks and chains, and I hope that we can show people, and ourselves, that. If we can't then we must accept that punk is nothing but a fashion trend which would be a very sad reality indeed.

In closing I'd like to say thank you to all the people who trusted me enough on a phone call alone to place an ad in here for our first issue. They are the ones who made this issue possible, and they have our undying gratitude.

I guess that's it. In future columns of mine expect the defending of weird political views, interesting ideas, and strange tales. I hate introductions so don't ever expect to see this again. So until the next time keep on fighting for what you believe in and what you want and never let them take from you what you have.

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## **Daniel Sink**

Allow me to introduce myself. My name is Dan Sinker. I co-edit this zine with Will. I'm not really sure what that means, I've done everything from write to layout to art. I've basically done what everyone else has. But for some reason (I volunteered) I get that fancy title. I really don't know if I like it, but that's beside the point. There are a lot of people that without which, this zine would never have happened. Some of them have writing here. Some of them don't. Some of them I just think have helped by keeping me sane (thanks mainly to my roommates), although I think they failed at that. Which brings me to my first idea.



How do you know if you are going crazy? Is it a gradual loss like going bald? How can I tell if I can't see the hairs on my pillow? Is it like needing glasses. If so, how do you know that you can't see? I think that I may be going crazy. Either that, or I'm having a mid-life crisis, in which case I guess I won't be needing a retirement plan. I bought notebooks the other day. Twenty dollars and seventy nine cents worth of notebooks. For those of you that know, that's a lot of fucking notebooks, 16 to be exact. I don't know why I bought them. I've been stressed out for the past few weeks, and I guess I just snapped. I told myself that I needed them, that they would make me feel better. I went to Woolworths, and picked out four notebooks. Then, I got really nervous, and just started grabbing more. About fifteen minutes after buying them, I realized that I had no idea why I had.

The scary thing is, it worked. I feel a lot better.

Now, for something completely different. Today, I went with some friends that were in town to the loft of a guy that I hadn't seen in a long time. When I used to know him (he was never a friend, barely even an acquaintance, but he was 'legendary' so I knew of him) he was an asshole. He talked a ton of shit, he used to blackball people, and had such an influence on a lot of other people, that then they would in turn blackball them too. I really hated him, hated his whole scene. I talked shit about him, about all of those like him. This was probably four or five years ago. Since then, I had heard that he had fallen. That a lot of the people that looked up to him hated him, that he had alienated a lot of people. I heard lots of stories, probably most of them untrue. Anyway, I never really knew what to

think, it never meant much to me. So today, I'm hanging out with him and these friends of mine. The funny thing is, he's great. He was a completely different person, than the one I had known before. It was really strange. He was nice, considerate, interested in me. I was absolutely blown away. People can change. I know that probably part of it was a change in myself, I was able to meet him halfway, but he met me there, you know? It really affected me, and I'm not even sure why. Perhaps it just made me feel a little better about humanity. If it did, than all I can say to him is thanks.

I think that I've been having difficulties with definitions lately. Perhaps that's been the problem with my life. I don't know what anything means anymore. What is a 'Job', and why aren't I getting paid for the eighteen hour days that I spend just trying to make sure that I don't fall behind in life. And, more importantly, why am I getting paid to sit behind a desk and enter numbers into a silicon chip? What is a 'life' anyway. How can some people have them, and others not. Last time I checked, a pulse was a pretty good sign that you were at least getting SOMETHING done. But now, I'm really not sure, I've run into quite a few cadavers in the past week or two, who for some reason think that they are making some kind of mark on the world. What is 'negativity' and why do so many people flee from it. What is 'emo-core', I don't think I need to explain that one. What is a 'relationship', and how am I supposed to be able to tell the difference between 'friends', 'lovers', 'accomplices', and 'enemies'. I mean really, what does it mean to sleep next to someone in a bed, if there is no nookie going on? What is 'art' I guess I'm supposed to know the answer to that one, considering that my school teaches it, but I really don't know. What does 'trust' mean, and why can't I put it on someone that I have never met.

Words confuse me. Life con-

fuses me. It's a damn good thing that I have a lot of notebooks.

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## Larry Livermore

Many of you, especially those who've been following my rantings in MRR of late, will be surprised to see me lending my name to anything that so prominently displays the word "punk" in its title.

And it's true that only a couple months ago I wrote in MRR that just hearing the word was enough to make me cringe, if not make me downright ill. So, what's up? Why *Punk Planet*?

Two reasons, really. One is that even though the word "punk" is much overused and more often than not misunderstood, it still means a great deal to many people. Secondly, I think it's really important to see alternatives to MRR emerge, and *Punk Planet* has the potential to be one.

I hope this isn't interpreted as an attack on MRR, which for the past 12 years has been far and away the single most important voice of the punk scene. But success exacts its own price, and I fear MRR has now fallen victim to the fate that generally afflicts institutions when they become so big and powerful that they lose touch with their roots. It's rather ironic that the current hubbub at MRR is supposedly about editor/publisher



Yohannan's determination to purge the zine of music and ideas that aren't "punk," because at least in my own opinion, MRR is headed in very nearly the opposite direction from the punk scene.

The reason I started reading the zine in 1982, and writing for it in 1987, was not so much that I liked all the bands in it, or agreed with all the ideas, but rather because it, more than any other magazine I had ever seen, was a place where all sorts of radical views, both cultural and political, could be aired. The magazine was exciting, it had the feeling of something that was right out there on the edge.

That stopped being true some time ago. Now, more and more, it's a lifestyle journal for retro-punks. You know, the kind who think if they dress up in the same clothes they wore 15 years ago, if they drink the same beer and play the same guitar riffs and hang out in the same neighborhood, that somehow it'll be the glory days of punk all over again. They're the second cousins of the Deadheads who think if they swathe themselves in enough tie-dye and soak themselves in enough patchouli the new Summer of Love will be just around the corner.

It's the age-old story of confusing style with substance. When punk first got big in 1977, the bands didn't copy bands from 15 years earlier. They didn't copy anything; they approached music and life as if everything were brand new. That's what made it so great.

Today, though, there are strict rules (and if MRR gets its way, they'll be even stricter) determining just how punk is to be played. Such rules will guarantee that old timers like Mr. Yohannan and his much younger, but old at heart disciples, will not have to have their assumptions or preconceptions challenged. For them it will always be 1977, just as for many other Berkeley denizens it will always be 1967. And if you search through

some of the more ancient coffeehouses, you'll even find the fossilized but still (barely) living remains of some hipsters and beats who haven't noticed that 1957 has come and gone.

All right, I said that I didn't intend this to be an attack on MRR, yet it seems to be sounding more and more like one. That makes me sad, because essentially MRR is Tim Yohannan's baby, and I genuinely like and respect Tim. I've had some furious disagreements with him, but even when we've been at opposite ends of the spectrum, I've always felt that he was motivated by the best of intentions. For a long time I felt that he and I were essentially working toward many of the same goals, and for that reason I was both happy and proud to be a contributor to his magazine.

But though I long ago recognized that Tim was the one person who, more than anyone else, made it happen, I never considered MRR to be his magazine. It was, and still is, the product of hundreds of people. I'm enough of a socialist to believe that all wealth is created by the workers, and that it should therefore be controlled by them.

While Tim portrays himself as a socialist, perhaps even a communist, his version of left wing politics is remarkably like that late and unlamented variety practiced in the Soviet Union. In other words, it's just like capitalism except that instead of the corporations owning and controlling everything, the government does.

People, myself included, worked for MRR for free because we believed it served some higher purpose than simply publicizing someone's favorite bands or helping independent labels to push their products. We didn't see MRR as simply another business, but apparently we were

mistaken. As Al Sobrante has pointed out, it's become a trade journal for the punk rock industry. And industry it is, as I can testify from my own experience. There is big money in punk rock today, and it is likely to get a lot bigger.

It's actually a testimonial to Tim Yohannan's particular form of integrity (though some might call it mere stubbornness) that at a time when he could easily turn MRR into a much larger magazine, he's actually narrowing its focus to the point where he will probably drive readers away rather than attract new ones from the huge pool of nouveau-punks who just started hearing about all this stuff from MTV.

But criticize it as I might, just the fact that I feel the need to expend this much energy talking about MRR shows how important it has been in my own life these past years. To leave it represents a major personal decision for me, as well as a political and an artistic one. As is the case with any such decision, it's accompanied by some fear and hesitation, a good measure of sadness, as well as hope and excitement over what might lie ahead.

Unlike most people my age (or of any age), I am not yet ready to settle into a comfortable rut. Mainstream punk has become just such a rut, as have other lifestyles and countercultures I've been involved with in the past. Each time that I felt it necessary to move on, it meant saying goodbye to old friends, knowing that if I happened to meet them again five or ten years down the line, for the most part they wouldn't have a clue as to who I had become or what my life was now about.

Normally I make a point of avoiding the past. It is too painful. Not because my past was so unhappy (though at this point in life I am beginning to have the impression that everyone's was), but simply because no one seems willing to let go of it. To me, on the other hand, the past is something to be escaped, over-



come, or, if nothing else, transcended.

The other night I made an exception to my general rule and agreed to attend a party that was a reunion of sorts for a crowd of Detroit and Ann Arbor people that I used to know 15 or 20 years ago. Some of them even dated back to the glory days of the MC-5 and the Stooges and the White Panther Party. I thought it would be fascinating to see how they'd weathered the years.

And it was fascinating. I suppose, if you're the sort of person who amuses himself at funerals by pondering the imponderables, who thinks it profound to wonder aloud at how someone can be alive one moment and dead the next.

Not that I want to give the wrong impression of my old friends. They were very much alive, in good spirits, friendly, and more in touch with the modern world than many people in their 40s. But most things about them, from their music to their hairstyles to the marijuana they chain smoked, were very nearly out of a time capsule. Minus a few wrinkles and balding heads, it could have been 1969. I expected Iggy to walk in any minute trying to scrounge some money for heroin.

But why, in a country where the prevailing esthetic always lags decades behind, and the dominant morality comes from a previous century, would I find this appalling? Many, perhaps most people, find it comforting to think that certain things remain constant, even if it's only the ability of large amounts of "killer bud" to ludicrously impair the intellectual faculties of otherwise reasonable people.

Perhaps it's a weakness on my part, this discontent with things remaining as they are. Given the laws of inertia, it would seem that I'm

fated to be perpetually dissatisfied. But as Oscar Wilde observed, discontent is the first step in the progress of a man or a nation. Considering that I've been severely discontented through most of my life, I should have made some great progress by now.

And have I? Am I any further down the road (the road to where, you might well ask, and I have no particular answer) than I was 5 or 10 or 20 years ago? Is that even the point at all? Or is progress really measured in terms of our awareness of who and what we are?

I had a moving experience yesterday. I was doing a radio show at KMUD, a community station in Northern California. I had been off the air for a couple years, and it felt good to be back again. I said a few words to that effect, trying to explain to the listeners just how much it means to be part of a truly DIY radio station, and encouraged them to take a look around them as the hills turned that dazzling green that lasts a few weeks at best in our corner of the state.

Then I played "Drink Deep" by Rites of Spring and had a full-on emo moment. I remembered the first time I'd played that song on the radio. It was eight years ago, on very similar kind of day, when the world seemed alive with new possibilities. We had stayed up all night, and when the show ended at 6 a.m., we walked down Madison Avenue while most of the city still slept, marveling at how even New York's harshness could be so completely overcome by the softness of a thousand trees putting forth their ever so delicate first leaves.

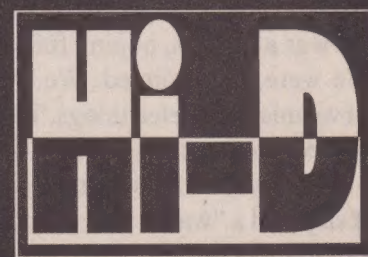
My life has been quite full since that time. I've traveled some 100,000 miles; as of this month the record company that David Hayes and I started in 1987 sold its 500,000th record; I wrote 82 columns for Maximum Rocknroll and published 22 issues of my own fanzine, which together add up to something like 1,000,000 words. Somewhere in there I also managed to pick up a degree from

the University of California at Berkeley.

By rights I should be exhausted. I suppose, and during much of that time I was. Worse than that, I spent a considerable number of those years almost suicidally depressed, unable to appreciate or even understand the value of what I was accomplishing.

"I believe in moments," the song goes, and maybe moments are all we get. We slog away for years on end, and then something, or, more often, someone, comes along to at least briefly make us see where we are, how far we have come, and that while it may seem we still have so far to go, the only real journey we need to make is one toward ever greater understanding.

Some people claim that my need to constantly re-invent myself points to a frightening lack of maturity. I say that it is evidence of my desire, my passionate desire, to not merely exist, but to live every moment of my life as if it were brand new. A wildly unrealistic, even impossible dream, you say? Of course it is. Such dreams are the only sort worth having.



I quit my job. I just walked out. My boss was sexually harassing me, as well as other women I worked with. The fucked up thing is that until I knew about them, I blamed myself.

It's strange. I'm a friendly person. I'm always joking with people. Sometimes it gets interpreted wrongly as flirtation. I'll admit that I'm partially at fault, but flirtation is



rarely my intention. My point is, when my boss started making comments that made me feel uncomfortable, I blamed myself. I had been too friendly to him. I opened myself up to this by giving him the wrong impression. Generally, it was just remarks about my body. The situation that sticks out in my mind was him staring at me intensely one day. When I asked why, he said that it was to make me feel uncomfortable.

He succeeded. More than he knew. He made me feel uncomfortable about me. About wanting to give people a chance. About wanting to be friendly & approachable. He made me feel as if I had done something wrong. I lost faith in people, my judgment, and myself. I had fallen right into the roles I had prided myself on challenging.

I found out I wasn't the only one. Of course every woman was sweetie, cutie, honey. He told a friend of mine that he wanted to take pictures of her. Another woman was a fresh piece of meat. Him doing this to other women enraged me. Hearing that he had done it to other women made me hate him even more for making me doubt myself.

We complained to his supervisor, who was a woman, hoping for support. We were disappointed. We were told that we misinterpreted things. There was no need to overreact.

The day after he was 'talked to' (a hand slap and a "watch your mouth") he was extremely distant. When we got to a more isolated area, he muttered things under his breath. I realized it would never be over. He was going to make my life hell. So I left. How couldn't I? I needed to hold onto some self respect.

When I initially left, I felt empowered. Looking back, I see it was mistaken. There is nothing empowering about not having a paycheck, or about giving in. I don't feel strong at all. I feel dirty, used. I feel like the fact that this man did this means nothing. He still has his job, I don't. I think he won. I think

that sucks.

I find myself more cautious now. I wonder if I did something to deserve this. I don't think so, it's just that I always thought there was some kind of justice in this world. I guess that is just one of my ignorances that I have to work on.

## **Jim Testa**

Demo tapes are as important to bands as guitars and drums. But while your average musician will spend hours pouring through music magazines to read about the latest Fender double wah-wah feedback pedal, or take weeks ransacking music stores to choose just the right new cymbal, a lot of bands throw together a demo tape without thinking much about it at all. That makes about as much sense as getting ready for a big job interview without thinking about what you're going to wear. You don't apply to a Wall Street banking firm in blue jeans and a t-shirt, and you don't apply for a job draining motor oil from crankcases in an Armani suit. But I've seen bands do things every bit as goofy when it comes to their demos.

And the silly part is, doing a demo really isn't all that hard. It just takes some planning, a little common sense, and - here's the hard part, actually - a few good songs and the musicians to do them justice.

### **What Do I Do First?**

The first thing you have to do is wait. One of the biggest mistakes bands make is recording too soon. You don't just write a song and run off to a studio (well, maybe you do if

you're the Rolling Stones.) But in most cases, you need to live with the song a while, play it out in front of people, figure out what works and what doesn't. Would it sound better if you started with the bridge, instead of the chorus? Do you really need that three-minute guitar solo at the beginning? Just because something sounds great in your practice space doesn't mean it will work in front of people. It's one of the biggest reasons why bands need to play shit gigs, even if they're for no money in front of a handful of people. Just working through your songs on stage is an educational process you can't duplicate anywhere else.

### **First Things First**

The first question you should ask before you begin recording is, what are you going to do with your demo tape? You should think of a demo tape as your band's business card, resume', and audition all rolled up into one. And - this is really important - you should make sure that you include all the information you would include on a business card on your tape. It really isn't important whether or not you have a flashy color picture sleeve on your tape, but you do need a sleeve that includes the name of the band, the titles of the songs, and a name, address, and phone number of someone in the band to contact. You'd be amazed how many bands spend a small fortune recording a demo and then send it out without any sort of contact information on the tape case. (Forget about that gorgeous 14 page presskit you've put together, that'll be in the garbage before the tape ever makes it into a tape deck.)

Maybe now would be a good time to discuss what you'll do with the demo tape when it's finished. Understanding its role will help your planning. Demo tapes generally have three uses: You give them to club bookers, to help you get gigs; you give them to the press to get reviews; and you give them to record labels so they'll sign you.



What do those three destinations have in common? Well, whether we're talking about a club booker, a music writer, or an A&R man from a label, we're talking about someone who gets dozens of tapes every week and probably can't stand the sight of them anymore. So the question is, how do you get your tape to stand out in the middle of all that confusion?

The first thing is to be concise. Hit them over the head with your three best songs and - I can't say this LOUDLY enough - PUT THE BEST SONG YOU HAVE AS THE FIRST SONG ON YOUR TAPE! Why? Simple. If the first song doesn't totally knock the listener out, the second song may never be heard.

A lot of bands will record six to ten songs and put them on a cassette to sell to their fans. That's a great idea, but that's not a demo tape. If Mr. A&R has one tape with three songs on it and another with ten songs, which one will he play first? The one he can listen to in a couple of minutes, of course. If you want to do an album length cassette release and sell it to your fans, great. But then dub off the three most killer tracks and use that as your demo; just enclose a little note that says "additional material available on request," and if the person wants to hear more, they'll ask for it. If you're selling the tape, then it makes sense to put a little time and money into coming up with a nice looking cassette sleeve, but believe me, the professionals who listen to your tape won't be influenced by how nice the thing looks if they don't like the songs.

#### How Much Do I Spend?

Okay, so you're well rehearsed, you have three killer songs that you feel are ready to record, and you want to get going. The next question is, where? You can do a demo on everything from a four-track

recorder to a professional 64-track studio. In many cases, that decision will largely be made for you by how much money you have to spend.

It's not a good idea to spend an enormous amount of money recording your first demo. On the other hand, you don't want to set up a boombox in your basement and tape a couple of tunes while you're rehearsing and call that your demo tape, either.

With the equipment available today, you can make fine quality demos on a four-track, but you have to know what you're doing. Ask around. There might be someone in another band you know who has a machine and might be willing to record your band for you. Don't just go out and buy a four-track unless you're willing to take a lot of time and learn how to use it properly, though.

Most cities, whether it's Peoria or New York City, will have studios that specialize in doing demo tapes for bands. The easiest way to find them is to ask other bands where they recorded their demos. Or you can try the classified ads in your local music paper or regional alternative magazine. Word of mouth is the best bet, though.

If this is your first time in the studio, it's even more important that you use a studio that's used to working with inexperienced bands. The studio, as part of your basic cost, will provide an engineer who will know how to work all the equipment, set up the mikes, get a good drum sound, and show you how to maximize your time in the studio. That's why it's good to talk to other bands who have used the same studio - you can find out which engineers are helpful and which are lazy and don't want to do anything for you but set the levels. Don't forget, the clock is always running in a studio. Plan ahead or you'll wind up spending a lot more money than you have to.

In the New York area, there are a couple of studios that specialize in

demos. One of the most famous is Don Fury's studio in downtown Manhattan. Every New York hardcore band for the past ten years has done their demos there, it seems. And Don is great at working with young bands and guiding them through the recording process. Water Music in Hoboken is another studio that's had a lot of experience with new bands. Whatever studio you use, talk to them first and make up a budget. Figure out how many hours you will need to record and mix and figure out what it will cost. Don't run the risk of running out of money before your tape is finished. By the way, an incredible amount of time in the studio is spent simply sitting around and waiting. It's a good idea to include a few bucks in your budget for coffee and doughnuts. And bring along a good book.

#### Should I Call Steve Albini?

In most cases, the studio engineer is all the "producer" you need to do a demo. But sometimes it makes sense to bring in someone to produce your demo - assuming you know someone who is experienced in the studio, knows your band, and will be able to offer sound advice on getting your songs on tape. Recording is an entirely different process than rehearsing or playing shows; you can do so much more with overdubs, vocal harmonies, effects, and so on. A good producer will suggest little tricks that will enhance the sound of your band.

There are some producers who own their own studios and offer package deals. It might sound like a bargain, but again, it's always good to talk to someone who's worked with this person before. Beware the producer who wants to change the way you sound, though... There'll be enough of those assholes to deal



with if you ever sign to a major label. Never sign a contract with a producer until you've had a lawyer go through it. There are a lot of sharks in the music business who will offer you free studio time and their services for nothing if you just sign a little piece of paper. Then you find out that if you get signed by a label, you are contractually bound to use that producer (or spend a big chunk of your advance to buy him off). You might even be signing away the rights to your songwriting. Not everybody in the world is out to rip you off — but there are enough creeps out there to justify your paranoia.

Once you've recorded all the parts, you have to mix them together, which is a lot of fun but totally perplexing if you've never done it before. Here, again, a good engineer or a producer will be an invaluable ally. The mix is at least as important as the actual recording — make sure you allot enough time in your budget to do a good job.

Besides the costs of renting the studio time, you will need to pay for recording tape (which is very expensive,) a mix down tape (usually to a DAT, these days) and a mixed down version on cassette that you can play at home. You can then have the demo professionally duplicated — which is fast and easy, and usually worthwhile if you want to make up a lot of tapes — or do it yourself on your deck at home. Again, your local music paper will have ads for places that duplicate tapes. Shop around for the best prices, or ask your friends where they had their tapes copied.

When it's time to send your demo out, always enclose a pleasant note introducing yourself, and then follow up in a few weeks with a phone call. That goes for whether you're sending the demo to clubs, press, or labels. Presskits, bios, and photos are fine, but don't be surprised when they disappear into the circular file. (Don't spend money on color photos — fanzines and newspa-

pers can't use them, and color magazines like Rolling Stone or Spin use slides.)

Be polite, but persistent. These people get deluged with tapes, but a few nice words on the phone might get them to give you a listen first. Oh, and there's one more thing you'll need.

Good luck.

## **Dave Hake**

I am currently counting my days by 2-liter Coke bottles. Living a third shiftlife, namely between the hours of 3:00 PM to 7:00 AM, sucks. Not working sucks. I've never been more stressed out "relaxing" in all my life.

Masturbation becomes something like the one friend you talk to too often. The conversations end up being eerily reminiscent of a record that won't stop skipping, if you're on the other side of the room sometimes you can't even expend the effort to lift up the needle. When it's all said and done, I may switch from Vaseline intensive care to petroleum jelly. Who knows? "Hmm... I should really get my tax return info in the mail... Hmm... I should really pay the rent... Hmm... Why am I not getting it up? Maybe I should think about someone being naked or something." There's a difference between having *deja vu* and being in a rut.

I've been listening to only two songs, both incidentally by the Zero Boys: "Stoned To Death" and "Stick To Your Guns". "Stoned to death for sexual offenses." I wish. Right now "getting play" is waiting

for a motorcycle thief metalhead to get drunk enough to even think about touching me.

Don't even ask. I just need a job.

I am one of those people who needs to do enough "not fun" things (e.g. work) in order to some relatively fun things (e.g. world domination). But the world today doesn't make it any easier for me.

As an example: Late night TV sucks. "Stop The Insanity". What is that all about? There are two kinds of TV at night: talk shows, and infomercials cleverly disguised as talk shows. Infomercials only seem like they might be interested for a few minutes until you realize that the difference between infomercials and talks shows is that it's some would-be demagogue who does all the talking. Which brings an idea to mind: I need to get an infomercial together.

It's times like these that I start having that strange psychic premonition that the "next big thing" must be just around the corner. Could it be just heat shimmers in this desert of modern desolation? Oh probably. But who can tell me that there isn't room for genuine, raw, rock n' roll chaos?

I wish there was some new sense of politics in the world. Or just even a "no politick" which would unabashedly recognize that the beauty of insurrection, revolution and utter chaos doesn't make any sense at all in the world. That it doesn't, and it shouldn't make sense. If all the world's a stage, and most of us stagehands, what reason do you need to let loose the sandbags and bring down the show?

People talk too much about the past these days. Too many people seem afraid to point out the bullshit in the present day when they can resort to personal nostalgia. Some of us don't have the luxury. Take this as a warning: we're going to eat you people alive.



Dissatisfaction rears its ugly head once again. Satisfaction is nothing, frustration everything. And so the world turns. When everything good happened before you were born, doesn't it seem like this TV series (i.e. "Life", Aaron Spelling Productions) should be getting canceled any minute?

Where are the Nielsen families when you need them?

For that matter, where are the scriptwriters?

But then again who needs them? I can think of a few good uses of "the bomb" as a plot device.

Oh for the joy of an empty time slot.

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My job is helping people use computers, and I am continually amazed at how profoundly helpless allegedly smart people can be. One of my customers is a lawyer. You know, suit 'n tie, fancy office, big bucks, the works. This guy can't tie his own shoes. He's like a little kid — when the stupidest little thing doesn't work the way he expects, he whines. I take his money, but it's not real fun being a wet nurse to somebody like that. He's just plain scared of having a new experience.

The punk-ethic version of DIY is a revolt against these attitudes. We don't have to take what corporate America decides we want; we are discovering that we have the power

and resources to create things for ourselves. Watching Punk Planet get born, and even participating a bit in its creation, is tremendously exciting for me — particularly seeing a bunch of people take a lot of big risks, learn a lot of new things, and discover that they have powers they didn't know they had.

Check this out... a message posted by Julia Cole today... she's handling the business end of Punk Planet and has been asking how to sell it to stores, and people have been helping her get up the nerve to try... so here's the result: "Proud of me? I walked into the local record/zine store today, talked to Otis, and gave him the spiel. He said it sounded like it was the sort of thing they could sell and that I should bring him 5 or 10 issues when they come out."

Ain't it grand? This is growth happening. Empowerment. Discovering that WE can do what MRR does. Hell, we can even do what Sassy does.

While I was writing this, I went downstairs and made some popcorn. I had bought a pound bag of it at the store last week for 35 cents, and popped it in a pot on the stove. It cost a nickel maybe, tasted way better than microwave popcorn, and the half a buck I saved didn't end up in the pockets of Philip Morris and Sony.

Last weekend a few of us were over at my friend Jeff's house watching a movie and he asked if we wanted popcorn. I asked if it was microwave popcorn and he looked at me like I was nuts. "Of course it's microwave". It didn't pop right and he threw it out.

So you're wondering what popcorn and lawyers has to do with punk and DIY. On the surface, not much. But if you look a little deeper, you'll begin to see a whole bunch of invisible walls that protect us from all the things we're afraid of trying. These walls imprison us in the familiar, and limit our possibilities. DIY empowers us by helping us break down some of these walls.

Jeff has a wall that protects him from the perils of homemade popcorn, and you probably do too. The lawyer has a wall that protects him from almost everything. Julia had a wall keeping her from going into a store and trying to sell Punk Planet. That wall's rubble now, and she'll never again have the same kind of fear about trying to sell stuff.

The key to breaking down these walls is to see them. Try doing things you've never done before. Whenever there's something you think you can't do, you're giving power to somebody else. Pretty much everything in the world is done by ordinary people like you and me. We may not all have the same talents or interests, but we all can do a lot more than we think we can.

Things didn't use to be this way. A bunch of changes in the past thirty years or so have conspired to make us dependent on others for most of what we need. For instance, in the 50's, a teenager could take apart anything in the house and figure out how it worked by looking at it. Lots did, and some even figured out how to put the things back together. There were no ICs, no transistors, no sealed magic boxes with stickers that said "No user serviceable parts inside." Technically at least, the world made sense and it was easy to develop a sense of mastery over it.

At the same time, corporate America, and Madison Avenue in particular, were expanding the boundaries of what would pass as ethical behavior. Get an old Life magazine from the attic and check out some ads from the 50's — their innocence seems quaint, even laughable. The intent of these changes has been to take away our power of choice; they want to make our choices



for us. And if you're reading this, you know they don't have OUR best interests at heart.

McDonalds doesn't want us to know how to cook, and they certainly don't care whether we eat healthy foods. They have buildings full of overpaid people whose job it is to build walls in our minds — walls that tell us that Big Macs are good and easy and safe, and that cooking for yourself is scary and dangerous and old-fashioned and not worth the bother.

Worse, there's almost no one left to teach us how to live and think independently. The schools have ossified into havens for swarms of small-brained bureaucrats. They no longer teach how to think; they teach WHAT to think, which is especially scary considering who the "they" is we're talking about.

So, if there's nobody out there who's going to teach us the ropes, and in fact a whole world conspiring to keep us FROM thinking on our own, we've got to take matters into our own hands. Zines and independent labels and self-produced shows and all the other DIY stuff in the punk world is great, but it's just the tip of the iceberg. At best, punk DIY opens our eyes to what we can accomplish. At worst it can be a means of escaping from the problem, rather than dealing with it. The problem, in case you've forgotten, is all those walls we've got.

If you've waded through all the boring philosophy hoping for The Answer, you're in luck. It's quite simple, really. Just do stuff you've never done before. Do what you're interested in, and what gets you things you want. Be reckless about it. When someone tells you not to do something, take it as a challenge, not a warning.

You need to be interested enough in the world around you to want to understand how ALL of it works. You need to take enough pride in what you do to want to do it well. And, you need to

know enough not to get fried when you take the back off the TV. All this requires knowledge.

If you read Aaron Cometbus, you'll see a lot of references to libraries. You know the old saying "Knowledge is Power"? Libraries are one of the best places to suck up knowledge. They're kind of a punk wet dream — they're free, they're everywhere, they let anyone in, you can stay as long as you want, and nobody hassles you. If you associate libraries with homework, spend some time in a big, unfamiliar one, just looking for interesting stuff. Most of the important stuff that people have ever known or thought about is in there.

Here's a short list of things I've found it worthwhile to know. There's zilions more, and you can build your own list as you go along. For me, though, these are some of the basics:

**Cooking.** Get a copy of *The Joy of Cooking* — it has recipes for everything from beans to roadkill. Everybody should know how to make pancakes and spaghetti sauce from scratch. Bake a loaf of bread. Roast a whole chicken. Learn how to eat well cheaply.

**Electricity.** Buy a cheap voltmeter at Radio Shack and one of their little booklets on how to use it. You can fix half the stuff that breaks, for peanuts, with just that. Find somebody to show you how to test a fuse, a switch, a diode, and a transistor, and how to solder, and you'll be a whiz at electronics. You can learn it in fifteen minutes. Really.

**Taking things apart.** There's an art to this, which you learn by experience. Anything can be disassembled; the trick is not breaking it in the process. So start with dumpster material and use a hammer if you get

stuck. Look at the pieces; they'll tell you the trick you didn't know. And pay attention to how far you can force things without breaking them. You find that out when they break.

**Getting information.** Back in the hippie days the Whole Earth Catalog called this "Access to Tools". There's zillions of ways of finding out obscure things, and finding them is half the fun. Every library has these two places to start: Thomas Register, which will tell you who makes virtually anything and how to contact them, and Gale's Encyclopedia of Associations, which lists tens of thousands of sources of free information about most anything.

**Running a business.** You've got two choices if you end up having to support yourself. One is running your own business; the other is very unpleasant. There are easy ways to get started and lots of good books that will tell you how. Start your first business with the attitude that it's just for practice: you win even if the business doesn't work out.

I think you get the idea... but how many of the things you just read about did you dismiss as something you could never do? THAT'S where the walls are!

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# Kim Nollan

I bought a new bicycle this week. I haven't ridden a bike in a while, but I had to get one to get to work. My new/old bike is a vintage Schwinn 1967(?) cherry red 3 speed roadster. In a word, my bike is Hot. It needs a check up, maybe a little grease, and new tires later on, but its been around for 20-odd years,



and should be able to stick around another 20-odd some, or so the bike mechanic told me. My bike is in good condition, certainly rideable, recycled, and it was cheap.

I got this bike simply because I got tired of taking the bus. It's draining, expensive, and time consuming. While trying to come up with a column for PP, I thought about the new freedom my bike gives me, and the ramifications of being (truly) automotive. This is what I came up with:

Bikes are socialist.

Bikes are widely available to everyone. There are cheap bikes and expensive ones, but they all work on the same principle, and they all can get you from one place to another. Bikes are utilitarian that way. Also, bikes are the same for everybody, so they are non-classist, and non-racist. Bikes are one of the oldest forms of transport, and all sorts of people can (and have) used them throughout history.

Bikes are Vegan

Maybe it's not very apparent from living in a city, but lots & lots of animals (400 million according to Vegan Action) end up as roadkill every year. That not only includes 'wild' animals, but it means domestic animals (your neighbor's cat?) and rats & stuff. And maybe that's not such a big issue to anyone (until you've hit a deer) but the point is, roads encroach on habitats and can destroy whole areas which is not good for the animals, or us selfish humans. Plus, bikes only use up the energy from your lunch, not any fossil fuels (which are dwindling, and which us Americans get very piggy about...) and that's pollution free.

Riding your bike is a Feminist Issue.

Well, maybe. My bike be-

comes another part of me, and I'm under complete control to figure out my route. I'm under complete self responsibility to pedal fast to get somewhere. It's all up to me, and that's self determination. And anything that supports my self determination is feminist! Plus, riding your bike is egalitarian because it's the same for everybody!

Riding your bike is Punk.

Your bike is totally self supported and self sufficient. You can make up your own rules about any aspect of bike riding, even rules of the road (providing you don't get hit by a car), and that is both DIY, and anarchist. plus, being on your own schedual is punk, whether it's waking up at dinnertime, or deciding where and when you'll ride. Secondly, riding your bike subverts oppressive institutions, and I'd like to venture that the CTA [or any mass transit system] is that institution. Aside from the fact that most of the trains and busses run 24 hours a day, and you can get virtually anywhere, the CTA is slow & costly. It's hardly ever on time (are there even scheduals?!) and takes forever. My 45 minute bus ride takes 20 minutes on my bike. And god forbid if the Busses ever actually match up! Then I'm too early, which is almost as bad as being late. Maybe it's just me, and I want everything to be convenient, but that's OK too, because when I'm on my bicycle, everything is convenient.

And lets talk about costs here. \$1.55 each way (\$1.80 if I'm lucky) is \$3.10 a day to get to work. That's about average for most people who use the CTA to get to work/school. That's like \$75.00 a month JUST TO GET TO WORK!! That doesn't include getting around otherwise, and being the mobile girl I am, that amount should be closer to \$100 a month, every month. Sure, there are passes for \$72 but I don't know very many kids who have that kind of cash up front. And there are subsidies, but they cost employers (not much) and many are

unwilling to pay. The CTA always wants to raise rates, but there still isn't adiquate service on most routes, and they surely aren't doing a better job. Plus, Chicago's transit system is one of the most expensive ones in the US. I'm sure this has just dwindled down to me complaining by now, but the point is, that people who don't have a lot of money to kick around (and I'd guess that that comprises a large rider population) get manipulated by the CTA many times over, and the already powerless can't do much about it because they are dependant on the CTA to get places.

OK, so I'm stretching all of this in an effort to get you to park your car permanently. Hey, overall riding abicycle is just plain fun, which should be reason enough for you to start. I envision legions of punk kids farming huge bike convoys to shows..... bikes in the pit..... bike riding zines..... bike-core! Ok, ok, enough. Just get one.

+Kim

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**Darren  
Cahr**

Advertising is the only thing we can understand anymore. Which isn't too surprising. It's fast, snappy, eye catching. You don't have to think. It just hits you and goes on its merry way. After getting sucked into a good commercial you can feel dirty, as though you've been taken advantage of. Kind of like sex.

Sex is, of course, the pri-



mary draw of all advertising. What do pantyhose and hamburger rolls have to do with each other? Both are used to hide unsightly fat, but more importantly both are sold to the public accompanied by pictures of beautiful women. Everything is sold with a picture of a beautiful woman. Products for women are sold with beautiful women, products for men are sold with beautiful women. Only men's toiletries and dictionaries escape the deluge—even encyclopaedias have that smiling blonde in a thong bikini. Ah, the quest for knowledge. ...

What does it all mean? Why do we need to see a beautiful woman before we'll buy a garbage bag? The answer is in semiotics, the science of signs: These "perfect" women represent what we want in life: If we're another woman, we want to be beautiful and perfect like the model hawking tv dinners, because society has told us that's all we're good for; if we're men, we want to stick our penises inside them instead. The women, silly, not the tv dinners. Anyway, our desire to be/fuck this woman will, inevitably, cause us to purchase the tv dinner. Maybe that's why men always look so disappointed at the dinner table. Salisbury steak is no substitute for female genitalia, no matter what last month's Penthouse Forum told you.

Of course, all of this should make us wonder about why beautiful men aren't used instead, but the answer's very easy. Men aren't supposed to even think about another man's appearance (that might mean—oh no!—that you're one of those awful homosexual people!), while women are supposed to spend every minute of the day looking at other women, judging their appearance, because that's all that women are good for in our society, right? Actual joke heard at a fraternity: The perfect woman is three feet tall with no teeth, with a flat head so you can rest a beer on her, and at midnight she turns into a pizza. One woman who overheard it replied that the

perfect man didn't belong to a fraternity, and the room got very quiet indeed.

Commercials merely reconfirm the sex roles society has so carefully crafted for us, and we accept it like a stupid bunch of lemmings. Men—on Monday wear a kilt to class. You'll be striking a blow for individualism and nonconformity, and you might even make a fashion statement if you're lucky. You'll appreciate it in the heat as well—it's nature's own air conditioning. Of course, after a while you'll get used to the wolf whistles. Women have to hear it every day.

If semiotics and postmodernism is reading the references, looking for subtext (i.e. beautiful woman=gendered sex roles), the next step is post-post-modernism—the illegibility of noise. Life slowly degenerates into a series of non-sequiturs which mean absolutely nothing, yet somehow manage to be dark and foreboding, reminding us of our doomed place in the universe.

Walrus!!!!!!!!!!!!!! The penguin jello approaches with lightening speed turn the poodles on stun the Quayle's egg falls with snappy crack and don't talk back my fine feathered missy thang and remember who pays your bills I'll scratch your eyes out, one two three!" See what we mean? I feel so angstful, I'd better sit down.

And at the Chicago and Franklin el stop, one block from the beautiful Cabrini Green housing project, some wiseass scrawled "Nous ferons l'amour, nous ferons la mort," on a poster. Although its still only a pretentious piece of graffiti ("let's make love, let's make death"), when you think about the average life expectancy for a child born in Cabrini Green these days, it sounds almost like tautology.

## Guest Column

# Kent McClard

Hello, this is a column I wrote for MRR, but it was rejected because it was too personal. I can't blame Tim for not printing it, but I am desperately trying to get my opinion out so I'm just sending out flyers and writing to as many people as I can. If you feel strongly about this issue then I urge you to write MRR and tell Tim what you think. The only way to fight this is to spread information.

We sure do live in confusing times. My favorite classic punk records were made by the likes of such bands as Generation X, The Clash, X-Ray Spex, Patti Smith, and The Damned to name a few, and all of their records came out on the major labels. Punk rock got it's start with labels like E.M.I., Crystals, and Epic Records. These bands played rock music, but they did it with a snotty irreverent attitude and with a raw uncut style that was fresh and exciting. Punk rock was the voice of rebellion, but soon punk rock was turned into just another product to be bought and sold as new wave became mainstream. So in a sort of new reaction punk rock changed and the hardcore was born. Bands like the Big Boys, X, Middle Class, Black Flag, Dead Kennedys, Bad Brains, Germs, and D.O.A. came along to change the face of punk rock and pioneer a new direction, and they were followed by Minor Threat, SSD, Code Of Honor, Youth Brigade, Social Distortion, and about five million hardcore thrash bands like D.R.I., Condemned To Death, M.D.C., Siege, Raw Power, The Freeze, Articles Of Faith, Husker Du (yes, Husker Du started as a thrash band), Jerry's Kids, and Kraut. Then sometime around 1985 a different



sort of tune started coming from the East Coast. Bands like Rites Of Spring, Embrace, One Last Wish, Beefeater, and Dag Nasty sort of turned the direction away from the 10,000 mile-an-hour style. The point is that the punk rock sound has never been defined by one band. Generation X, Big Boys, Butthole Surfers, Void, Embrace, D.R.I., X, Social Distortion, Gang Of Four, Faith, Conflict, G.B.H., Crass, United Mutation, Minor Threat, Avengers, Rites Of Spring, Black Flag, Ignition, Clash, Bad Brains, Cramps, Uniform Choice, Sex Pistols, and Discharge were all punk bands, and yet they all followed their own direction and played their own style of music.

Today, punk rock is just as diverse. The dichotomy in style is vast. Bands like Heroin, Crossed Out, Queens, Avail, Still Life, Assuck, Rain Like The Sound Of Trains, Finger Print, Man Lifting Banner, Condense, Man Is The Bastard, Buzzoven, Life But How To Live It?, Ivich, Doom, Screeching Weasel, Fugazi, Rorschach, Born Against, Iconoclast, Spitboy, Evergreen, Policy Of 3, Manumission, Diesel Queens, Jawbreaker, Sedition, Current, J Church, Insaints, and Econochrist are all doing their own thing while at the same time falling within the general cesspool of punk rock. From the very beginning punk rock was an attitude. It didn't matter if the sound was based on melody, speed, aggression, beauty, dirge, or general insanity, and it didn't matter if a band's roots lied in rock, folk, country, funk, reggae, jazz, blues or just some wild acid trip. Punk was a state of mind. Punk was a do anything, go crazy, be what you want to be kind of music that wasn't nailed down and classified. The only rule was to break all the rules and have a damn good time.

Last time around I mentioned the fact that the Rain Like The Sound Of Trains 7" was refused for review because MRR, or more correctly, Tim Yohannon has decided that RLT/SOT is actually a progressive rock band and not a punk/hardcore band... Well, as it turns out Tim has also refused the new Still Life - From Angry Heads With Skyward Eyes double LP, the Indian Summer/Current - split 7" (actually, in the end Tim personally reviewed this to further his version of what punk rock really sounds like), Neurosis - Enemy Of The Sun LP, the Junction - Swingset 12", and I imagine he will soon be refusing the new Evergreen - 12" along with a whole host of new records that don't fit his definition of the punk rock sound. The entire basis for his rejection of these records is based simply on sound, and he is not taking into consideration the record labels involved, the personal politics of the bands, or the motivation behind the music. Tim is simply reducing punk rock/hardcore to musical style.

In other words, if your band puts out a record on a label that sells records to the punk community, if your band is embraced by the punk community as a punk band, if your band plays at the Gilman Street or plays exclusively with other punk bands in other parts of the country, if your band tries to play only cheap all ages shows, if your band is opposed to major labels, if your band has a political or personal-political edge, and if your band supports Maximum Rock'n'roll and the activities of the punk community then you may discover that the all mighty master of punk rock, Tim Yohannan, may declare you to be progressive rock, or pop, or metal. In the new world, where Tim is the all-knowing creator of the punk rock, only those sanctioned by the self-appointed master himself are entitled to call themselves punk rock. Tim will soon be holding seminars where in four six hour days you too can learn the true meaning of punk

rock. If at the end of his course you can pass his test then you will be awarded with the official punk membership card under the care of the almighty authority know as Tim Yohannan. But if you fail then you will be cast out into the purgatory known as limbo. In limbo you will still be allowed to play with punk bands, punks will still be allowed to listen to your band and buy your records, and you can still call yourself a punk band, but you will not be allowed to be listed, reviewed, or advertised in the official punk bible know as Maximum Rock'n'roll.

And in new developments, fanzines that do not sound punk will no longer be offered review space. Under the current guidelines, set out by the all-knowing Tim, punk can only be defined by musical sound and therefore every fanzine will be played by Tim in an effort to weed out the true fanzines from those wimpy magazines that fail to sport that patented punk sound that Tim knows and loves. This test will now also be applied to all columns, articles, political ideologies, photos, artwork, interviews, and letters that are submitted to Maximum Rock'n'roll. Times are changing back. No longer will you have to read columns that don't have that three-chord traditional punk sound. Punk is not a state of mind, an expression of personal ideology, or a method of challenging the music industry. Punk is a sound, a pattern to be followed and learned from your elders. Tradition is the key to the punk sound. Worship the past so that we can repeat it over and over again.

OK, so Tim isn't going to hold seminars, listen to fanzines, or issue membership cards to his punk rock, but in essence I feel that he is doing exactly that. Tim is trying to



use MRR as a tool to steer punk rock in the direction that he wants it to go. That means he is using his personal taste to dictate what records get reviewed and what records are given to Epicenter to sell. He is trying to promote a version of punk rock that is not accepted by all those involved in punk rock. The problem with this, is that in all honesty, I can seriously say that Tim is completely justified in doing all of this. What!!! What the hell am I saying??? Well, as much as I would like to see it change, Maximum Rock'n'roll is Tim Yohannan's magazine. It belongs to him and he makes all the changes and the decisions that really matter. He behaves exactly the way I behaved when I was doing No Answers. He does what he wants with what is his. I can complain, and I can whine about it here in the very pages of his magazine only because he is nice enough to grant me that space (thank you, Tim).

So why am I mad and why am I writing? Well, it seems that if enough people argue with Tim and complain then maybe he will change his mind. As I said last time around, I wish Maximum Rock'n'roll was an outgrowth of the punk scene and not just Tim Yohannan's personal vehicle of propaganda. Or, better yet, I wish I had a personal vehicle of propaganda that was as big or bigger than Maximum Rock'n'roll! It used to be that there were other magazines that rivaled MRR in terms of circulation and visibility, but unfortunately magazines like Profane Existence, Ink Disease, XXX, and Suburban Voice have vanished and those that are still around, such as Flipside, are more suited as toilet paper than reading material.

So now we live in a world where the only large punk magazine that comes out on a regular basis is Maximum Rock'n'roll, and therefore if Tim decides to declare that the new Still Life - double LP can't be reviewed in the pages of his magazine and that Rebel Music can't run advertisements for the new

Rain Like The Sound Of Trains - 7" because it isn't "punk", then Tim can effectively keep 80% of the punk scene from ever hearing about these punk records. That is a real problem, especially for smaller labels that might rely on MRR as the only widely distributed magazine that covers punk rock. But again, this isn't Tim's fault. The entire punk scene is to blame for this, not Tim.

A couple of years ago I wrote a letter to Maximum Rock'n'roll arguing that MRR should shut it's doors and stop the magazine because it had grown too powerful and influential. I still believe this, but the reality is that MRR isn't going to go away. The only logical solution for all of this is to either wait for Tim to die of old age or try to get some other magazines off the ground that can rival MRR in frequency and circulation. It is a god-awful task, but until this happens Tim can effectively use MRR to bury any record he wants, and realistically there isn't anything any of us can do to stop him.

But, we can protest and complain. In MRR #128 Tim writes, "Generally speaking, if it ain't reviewed here, it's not because we never got the record...and more than likely, it's not being reviewed because it has absolutely nothing to do with punk or hardcore and sucks big time." I do not believe that Tim has the ability to judge for the world what is and isn't punk. So, in solidarity with all of the people that are being kicked out of the punk scene by the self-appointed all-knowing punk deity known as Tim Yohannan, Ebullition Records will no longer send any records to MRR for review until this arrogant attitude of Tim's goes the way of the dinosaur. Tim is not the final authority on punk rock, and I do not need to validate my releases by having them reviewed in

Tim's MRR. Tim does not hold a monopoly on punk rock. All I can say is that Tim's taste in music "sucks big time", and I resent the way he uses words like "we" rather than "I" when it is obvious that some people that work on MRR like these records, and I think it sucks that he tries to disguise MRR as a magazine devoted to following the punk scene while all along he is using his personal taste in music to decide what is and isn't punk rock.

In addition, in MRR #128 Tim replies to a letter written by Peter of Crucial Response and at the end Tim says, and I do quote, "Whereist goes the scene goes MRR." What a load of crap. That is flat out bullshit. In the very same issue Tim sets out a new review policy designed to alienate certain sections of the scene. MAXIMUM ROCK'N'ROLL DOES NOT REPRESENT THE ENTIRE PUNK SCENE. MRR goes where Tim wants it to go, and that has nothing to do with the direction of the scene. The words washed up and conservative keep coming to mind. Times change, and if you are afraid of change then you are worse than my parents, who in fact are younger than Tim and probably more open minded at that.

I've run out of words. We live in a world where power dictates, and the powerless either die or find some way to make their own power. Do or die. We will see.

As a final note, I still admire Tim for doing MRR for all of these years. I started off with issue #12 of MRR and year after year the magazine has never failed to be a source of information, inspiration, depression, and frustration. So as much as I feel like Tim is acting like one of my grandparents with all his talk of tradition and getting back to the original sound of punk (not meaning, but sound????), I'm still glad he is kicking around, even if he has become a conservative fart in his old age.





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# TOTAL CHAOS



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Welcome to the Portland scene report. There's a lot happening here lately and a lot of shit to talk about. Hopefully, I can help make people aware of some of the lesser-known bands from the rose city. Yes, we do have alot of really cool bands; Hazel, Spinanes, Everclear, Pond, Heatmiser, etc. But these bands have, for the most part, been around enough that they have a pretty good following. My goal is to shine some of the spotlight on the folks who might not get the coverage they deserve (both locally and abroad). Anyhow, let's get started.

Crackerbash is dead. They were one of the few bands worth really gloating over in Portland. I have heard rumors of a love interest being the motive for their destruction. But at the risk of becoming a tabloid attraction, let's just cite "personal differences". They were a damn inspirational band. All I can say, is that they will be sorely missed.

Now, let's talk about some bands that you probably have not heard of-- because I know they probably would like you to hear them. Skiploader has a very catchy, almost (dare I say...) emo sound at times, reminding me of mid-period Dag

Nasty. With tons of poppy hooks and infectious stops, the vocals are the perfect compliment to the accompanying music. Tom's vocals have a great tone to them, one of those voices that will never annoy or sour in appeal. With the release of their first 7" and the LP being finished up in the studio (with a Heatmiser person at the helm) these guys will quickly be a force to reckon with. Buy their 7". It's called "Name Dropping." It's on Schizophonic: 233 Commercial NE, Salem, OR, USA 97301.

Dimbulb plays more poppy/melodic/noise kinda stuff. They just played their first year anniversary at the X-Ray, vintage suits and all, to an enthusiastic crowd. Tom (the vocals and guitar behind Skiploader) was temporarily pounding the drums (damn, he makes great drummer faces). Not to pigeonhole them, but I think Dimbulb could some day fill in that niche that Crackerbash seems to have left behind. They have a tape out on their own label, Satellite Records, but last I heard, it was sold out. I'll have their address by next issue.

Punky Rockit is a relatively new band, with ex- Otis and ex- Suckerpunch (at least that's what I was told by someone) members.



DIMBULB at X-Ray 3/26/94  
(Photo: Bret Rake)

These guys are punker than shit. The two guitar player/singers switch off playing drums, and all three sing. They play total pissed off, but still melodic punk rock. It's kinda like Born Against meets that East Bay pop-punk sound. But don't hold me to that...

On to southern territories, Bicker are the coolest guys in the whole wide world of punk. They live in a house in Eugene called the Monkeyhouse -- in reference to Ben's (vocalizer/guitarist for Bicker)



DIMBULB (w/Tom from Skiploader on Drums)  
at X-Ray 3/26/94 (Photo: Bret Rake)





**PUNKY ROCKIT** at X-Ray 3/26/94  
(Also gracing our cover, thanx Brett!)  
(Photo by Bret Rake)

distributed by Dutch East). I'll have more on these in the future.

Clubs? Well, there will always be Satyricon (503-243-2380). It's a bar and has been around forever, and if you go inside and look at all of the flyers and stickers and press-kit photos, you'll quickly notice how many cooler than shit bands have played there over the years. Plus,

the people who work there are the coolest. The only bar my band will play. The infamous X-Ray (503-721-0115) is still the coolest all-ages place in town. They've got great food and you can see great local and touring acts, in a cozy environment, for cheap. La Luna (503-235-9696) is the local "big time" club. It is all ages, but also has a lounge upstairs as well as a beer garden, stocked with plenty of microbrews, within view of the stage. Shows range from cheap to mid-range, and they have everything from local acts to major touring acts. There are also rumors of a cafe called Captain Beans which is talking about getting into the all-

ages show business. And the folks from Punky Rockit/Fourth Day Submerged are trying to do the basement thing. In Eugene, call Icky's, a new all-ages, punk-owned/run club. I don't have their number, though... sorry.

Well that's all for this exciting issue. Hopefully I'll be back next issue with more bands, clubs and bookstores and hangouts and more cool shit than you can handle. Hey, if you're from Portland and you want to help with this column, drop me a line at my address below. Also, if you're a band, zine, or general punk person and are wondering why I didn't mention you, it's probably because I'm too lazy to go see many shows or I just haven't heard of you (or you suck, but we'll count that out for now...) drop me a line! Hopefully I didn't piss too many people off... Just remember -- you are probably reading what is just the beginning of something very cool, and it was done by a bunch of people who are a lot like you. So go out and start something yourself.

**Bret Rake**  
**12545 SW Fairfield St.**  
**Beaverton, OR**  
**97005**

zine, Monkeyshines - where they put on shows in the basement. Having just finished a demo with help from one of the guys in Lazyboy (Corvallis band who has a cool 7" out on Alied), Bicker has a sound that calls on both East Bay pop punk and Bitch Magnet equally. If you write to them real nice, they might be able to set you up with a copy of their demo for a nominal fee. You might even be able to get a copy of Ben's zine... 85 E 19th, Eugene, OR 97401.

Artless Motives is another new Eugene band, who will be doing a quick west coast tour with Bicker in late March. They have a kinda soulful, fast, melodic, sing-along type of sound, quite reminiscent of Operation Ivy. They have a tape out as well, and you should be able to reach them through the Bicker address above. Once again, I'm not too sure what the cost is, so you'll need to write for prices.

Some other bands I didn't have time to see or cover are: Ten Four (supposed pop-core, but I won't know until I see them play this weekend. Nice folks, though), Ice Cream Headache, The Minimals, Joyless, and my band, Rake (which, by the way, we have a seven inch called "Stupor" coming out on Hodge Podge/Incision Records soon. It'll be

**BICKER** at Monkeyhouse 3/18/94  
Photo: Bret Rake





**SEATTLE****washington**

So there we were standing on the shore of that one big lake. You know the one I'm talking about - "Lake Even Better" or whatever it's called, or maybe it was that one that is named after a bird. Whichever one it was there we were in Cleveland looking out over this "lake" and all pretty thoroughly amazed that we couldn't see the other side, when this girl from a nearby group of people asks John (he's the singer for Undertow), "Hey, where are you guys from?"

"Seattle," answers John.

"NO WAY!" exclaims our new friend as her companions jump to attention at the mention of the "Emerald City."

"Yes way. Will you take us home and make us spaghetti?"

Well, we didn't get any spaghetti out of the deal, but we did manage to avoid getting asked if we knew Nerdvana. As it turns out, myself, Undertow, and Brian, our guide to the fair city of Clevo, were lucky to get off that beach unharmed because at some point the rather large and unruly mob of new school kids that inhabited it had decided that we were very uncool. Was this a direct result of our admitting to being from Seattle? I'd wager it was. So where, if anywhere, am I going with this? I'm going up to a high and mighty precipice from which I can then speak down to you all about this place I inhabit as if I know everything and make all the rules, too. Here we go:

"Listen up people! Seattle, Washington is just another city like any other city on the map. We are not cool because we are here and neither are we snobs. The media hype surrounding us had made things nearly unbearable. No, none of us know Nirvana. The same goes for Pearl Jam and Soundgarden. We haven't seen them play any more then the rest of you have. "Grunge" is a myth, O.K. people? It's a marketing tool for MTV and the fashion industry, but it sure as hell isn't punk or hardcore so don't ask punk and/or hardcore people from here about it anymore. Flannels keep you warm, period. Espresso is a drink, period. The Sonics are a team, period. You all have bands, clothes, beverages, and sports in your own cities so get the fuck off of ours, O.K.?!"

Perhaps I'm being a bit harsh. Seattle is undeniably one of the best places to live in this country. Be that as it may, it hasn't been exactly wonderful for the punk scene in the last couple of years. Maybe you've heard of the term "Nirvanafication"? No? Then I'll explain it by telling you the story of the O.K. Hotel. Way back in the 80's there was this club called The Monastery. It was one of those Bat-Caver dance club type deals. It was also THE last place

you wanted your kids to go, which of course made it very popular with the kids. "You will never find a more wretched hive of scum and villainy," said one local paper. No, that was Obi-Won Kenobi, but you get the idea. They had everything - Drugs, alcohol, teen prostitution, donkey acts in the back - the whole nine yards. The city in all of its divine wisdom responded by creating the Teen Dance Ordinance. Sounds like something out of "Footloose," doesn't it? Yep, and just like "Footloose," it really sucked hard. Basically what it did was shut down The Monastery and any other under-age clubs by stating that no group of teens could gather for the purpose of "dancing" unless the business in question had some insane amount of liability insurance that no one could afford. All of the clubs closed, and for years there were virtually no all ages shows in Seattle. In 1989, a group of punks (well, punk and hardcore kids; look, for the sake of this, it's all the same thing, O.K.?) discovered a loophole in the Ordinance that stated that if an event was sponsored by a non-profit organization it was free from the insurance restriction. Thanks to this and the food bank, shows became a reality again for a while. The first shows were held at a place called the New City Theatre, and later at Washing-

UNDERTOW (Photo: Dave Larson)





ton Hall, but eventually the owners pulled the plug on both of them. Then they found The Party Hall. The Party Hall was a run down old teen center in Seattle's not-so-safe Central District. The Party Hall Summer happened and it was truly amazing. Not only did it help to spawn such bands as Galleons Lap, Undertow, Ten-O-Seven, Whipped, and Positive Greed, but it also served as a venue for bands like Jawbreaker, Bad Trip, GO!, Shelter, Jawbox, Headfirst, and Neurosis. Then the cops started paying attention. Ask Paula Sen from Whipped, who used to put the shows on, if the cops or the courts give two shits about the "Non-Profit Clause" and she'll tell you all about the rather large fine she received. While all of this was going on there was one other place for all ages shows -- The O.K. Hotel. (Side note: The O.K. Hotel was the place where Bridget Fonda and Matt Dillon worked in "Singles," but that has nothing to do with this story.) Somehow they had managed to get insurance that was affordable and enough to cover the ordinance at the same time. Some really great shows happened there. The Accused & Undertow, ALL, Green Day, No Escape, and Spitboy to name a few. It was a just a good place to see bands. Then Nirvana happened. Remember that? Do you want to know what teen spirit smells like to me? It smells like the O.K. Hotel's insurance company reading about slam dancing and stage diving in the local paper in an article inspired by Nirvana's MTV buzz clip perversion and threatening to cancel the clubs insurance unless they could assure them that no such activity would be taking place. The club did this by discontinuing punk shows. That was the last place in Seattle for all ages shows for more than a year. That's Nirvanafication. Thanks Kurt.

But that was then and things are much different here now. You know how you're always looking back and thinking about old times and about how good the scene was "back then"? Well that's how good our scene is right now. A lot of people have been putting in a lot of hard work and the results are exciting. There are now at least three stable all ages venues within 20 minutes of each other in the Seattle area. Attendance at shows has been great, with

**TEN-O-SEVEN**  
(Photo: Dave Larson)



more and more people coming out all the time. The Straight Edge scene here is awesome, thanks mostly to **Undertow**. **Undertow** have been around for years but have only just in the last year established a large local following. If you haven't heard them yet you are going to have plenty of chances to in the near future as their 1st LP is about to be released and they are even now planning their 2nd U.S. tour. They can be reached by mail at 3551 N.E. 166th, Seattle, WA 98155. Being so far removed from the rest of the country has helped to make Punk and Hardcore go hand in hand around here. Most shows consist of a wide variety of styles, and you'll see a lot of the same kids alternately screaming along to the S.E. anthems of **Undertow** and dancing like fools to the pop-punk stylings of **Ten-O-Seven**. Hopefully this won't change, because a lot different styles of bands have worked together to help bring our scene to this point and if we lose sight of that we could well lose the whole thing. Again. I've been to places where all the H.C. kids hated punk and vice versa and I thought it was truly sad. Enough of my rambling -- this is supposed to be a scene report, dammit! **Ten-O-Seven** are another holdout from days past who are getting more attention as of late. They have a ton of stuff out but are still largely unknown outside of Washington. A

U.S. Summer tour is now in the planning stages for them as well. You can write them for info regarding the tour or their releases c/o Matt at 4711 12th Ave. N.E., Seattle, WA 98115. Saying that **Saidchild** are an offshoot of **Undertow** is pushing things a bit, but the band does contain two ex-members (Seth and Joel) and up until recently one current member (Demian). Their sound is nowhere close to that of the 'Tow. Someone once described them as Morrissey singing for Boston doing Inside Out covers, and I honestly don't think I can come up with a better description. They have a new CD5 and 7" out on Overkill now. Their address is 3401 N.E. 65th #204, Seattle, WA 98115. **Lunchpail** is a semi-new band and are fast on their way to becoming our new "most likely to be on Gravity" candidates. Write to them at P.O. Box 95383, Seattle, 98145-2383. I got that address off their demo. **The Wayouts** sound similar to **Ten-O-Seven** musically, but with incredible female vocals thrown into the mix. I don't have an address - watch for them. **Hush Harbor** are a big deal around town right now and for good reason - they flat out rule! They are really hard to describe so just buy their new 7" on Scorch or send for their demo to P.O. Box 85796, Seattle, WA 98145-1796. **Whipped** are still kicking around town as well. They mostly play at a bar called the



Lake Union Pub so I don't get much of a chance to see them any more. We can all hear them, however, on a new double 7" comp. entitled "The way Things REALLY Ought To Be" with friends, **Chicken**, **Meatminder**, and **Sourpus**. You can get this by sending \$5.00 to Carving Knife Records P.O. Box 829, Seattle, WA 98111-0829. Or you can write to Whipped directly at 3040 N.E. 91st, Seattle 98115. They also have a split 12" coming out soon with a band called **Violent Green**. Paula (Whipped) was also kind enough to give me info. for a bunch of local bands that are currently outside my spectrum, so I am going to pass that on to you now. **N.American Bison** (ex-Jesters of Chaos) - 7" & tape out now. 2506 3rd Ave. W., Seattle 98119. **Chicken** (ex-Aspirin Feast) - 1107 E. Mercer #2, Seattle 98102. **The Ricketts** - 7" out now. \$3.00 to 12505 Miller Rd., Bainbridge Island, WA 98110. **Portrait of Poverty** (ex-Subvert) -- 7" for \$3.00. P.O. Box 299, Tacoma, WA 98401-0299. **Not My Son** - Demo \$3. 2619 Western Ave., Seattle 98107. **Meatminder** - P.O. Box 80131, Seattle 98108-0131. She also wanted me to mention **Bristle**, **Christ-driver**, **Inhumane**, **Pregasm**, and the **Mukelteo Fairies** (queer-core) but didn't have their addresses.

Around the state: Three good things about Olympia -- **Unwound**, **Mary Lou Lord**, and **Lync**. I sure can't think of anything else. Bremerton, WA brings us two new bands - **Fight For Change** and an S.E. band called **Serenity**. That's all I know about them. Heading north we get to Everett (the Syracuse of WA) and find **Spearhead**. They are a relatively new hardcore band that would probably sound right at home on Profane Existence if it weren't for the odd melody that creeps its way in now and again. Much further up north we get to the town where I spent the 1st 22 years of my life - Bellingham. I hardly know what's going on there band-wise at all anymore. I do know that there is a great new H.C. band there called **Jayhawker**. They sound kind of "progressed" like Quicksand or something but with harsh screamed vocals. Write to them at 925 32nd St., Bellingham, WA 98225. They will have something out soon. Another cool band from B'ham is **Wingnut**. They are more on the punk side of

**Jayhawker**, but there are similarities. I don't have an address, but if you really needed to I'm sure you could contact them through Jayhawker. Going east..... I'm not really sure what is going on in Spokane right now. David Hayes moved over there a while back and I'm sure he's stirring the pot. It will be interesting to see what happens.

**SHOWS/VENUES:** Most of the shows around here happen on the Eastside. This is not actually Seattle but two cities right on the outskirts called Bellevue and Redmond. The Redmond YMCA is the site of most of our all ages shows thanks to the work of a woman named Kate Becker. To inquire about getting a show at the Redmond Y or to get info on other Eastside all-ages locations call Kate at (206) 556-2330. Inside Seattle we have a place called the Velvet Elvis Theatre. It gets past the Teen Dance Ordinance because it has "fixed seating." That and the fact that the cops don't really know about it yet. The person to get in touch with on this one is Meg Watjen at (206) 323-3826. She can also probably point you in other directions if need be. If you're in a H.C. band you might want to give Derek

Harn a call at (206) 528-7529 to see about a show. Derek also has a clothing co. called Lee Majors. He makes THE BEST boxer shorts out of old Star Wars sheets, and he's starting to make Star Wars bras too. Write to P.O. Box 2293, Seattle, 98111 for more info.

Well, that's about all I can manage. There are a lot of bands that I didn't have room to mention. Bands like **Engine Kid**, **Sunny Day Real Estate**, **Christopher Robin**, **The Plan**, **The Green**, **Pillow**, **Has Been**, **Appleseed**, **The Gits**, **The Treepeople** and others. When coming to Seattle there is really only one thing that you have to do and that is go to Fallout Records. They are the best record store ever - totally punk rock! As for me, I do a 'zine and a label called Excursion. You can write to me for info or whatever -- send a S.A.S.E. -- I'm not rich! O.K., this thing is over now, really. Thanks for your time. 'Bye now.

**Dave Larson**  
P. O. Box 20224  
Seattle WA 98102



LUNCHPAIL  
(Photo: Dave Larson)



# Temporary Samiam Logo

my phone recorder turned out to be broken, so wouldn't want to be accused of misquoting him.

story. If you ever meet SAMIAM make sure to ask James about the time he stopped a guys heart in Germany...(never knew they were violent did you)...well...it was kinda a mistake. Oh well. The world may never know. We were promised photos, but for some reason, either because of Atlantic's involvement in Samiam's affairs (they had to get new photos shot) or something else, we never got them. Interview by Will Dandy

**Will:** How did you guys get started?

**James:** SAMIAM basically started out in the ashtray (an Oakland punk house that was home to Jake from FILTH and Jesse from OPERATION IVY). ISOCRACY had recently broken up and Sergie asked Jason if he wanted to try something and Jason replied with a drunken kiss. Mark was easily because he was at most MR. T. EXPERIENCE shows and James was found by way of Sergie's twin brother who was "jamming" with James. Our first show was in January 1989 opening for CHRIST ON PARADE.

**Will:** Have you started recording the new album?

**James:** Well we've recorded two demos since BILLY (our last record). The first one had five songs and was to get interest in a new label. Not so much a major, but one bigger than New Red Archives so we could get better recording budget and distribution. Of those songs we already dropped three of them. Then a bunch of labels were pretty interested, not in a GREEN DAY or NIRVANA craze, but we had pretty much all labels feeding us and stuff.

Then Atlantic paid for another demo (we dropped two of those five by now too) and now we are practicing to

I called SAMIAM to find a hectic gathering of people and James Brogan to interview. Atlantic wanting to move up their recording date was apparently one of the reasons for the confused mass at the other end of the phone. The first attempt went awry when all the questions had to be asked again because I It's pretty much the same except for the show

record a LP for them in mid-April. As of yet we have fifteen songs and are going to record it with this guy Lou Giordano who did SUGAR and MOVING TARGETS.

**Will:** Do you think that being on Atlantic will change your sound?

**James:** No...well actually yeah...it will. Not in so much what we are trying to sound like, but it will help us achieve the sound we want. Our last LP sounded good, but the guitars were low and it wasn't as big a "heavy" as we wanted. I think with the bigger budget Lou. The obvious point in your question is whether Atlantic will want us to "puss" out. The answer is no. Our A & R guy handles four bands: us, BAD RELIGION, JAWBOX, and TESTAMENT. He honestly likes harder music and he doesn't want us to put out any thing weaker than our last stuff...which testament probably would think is already pussied-out.

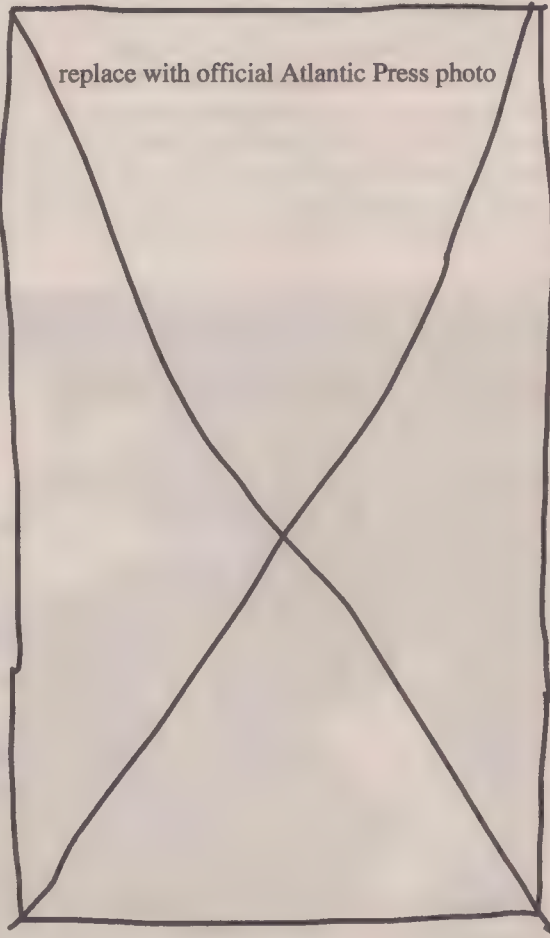
**Will:** So you think the only change will be in having more money?

**James:** More money, more promotion, more help. New Red Archives was great to us, but when we pulled into a city on tour we were alone. Record stores wouldn't have any of our records, no ads, no flyers, etc...

I'm not saying everything will change,

but being on a big label means more people are there to help SAMIAM survive. It's disheartening when you die

replace with official Atlantic Press photo





on tour and you play a show that could've been better, but no one knew you were there. We realize a lot of people will be bummed on us for signing and that sucks. But it will weed out the people who like SAMIAM's music from others who just think they are "cool"...a "cool indie cult band." A band that sells out by playing shitty commercial music and playing for high door prices, but the label they are on could be anyone.

**Will:** What do you think of the whole sell out trend in punk rock?

**James:** The sell out trend in punk rock? Do you mean when DISCHARGE started to sound like LED ZEPPE-

LIN? Nah...well I guess you mean BAD RELIGION and then GREEN DAY then JAWBOX, and then us for the latest installment, and before that SONIC YOUTH and NIRVANA, etc... Well, obviously I don't see it as sell-out or cash-in or whatever. I see it as bands deciding to take opportunities

given to them. I think the last SONIC YOUTH and JAWBOX albums are noisy and uncompromising, but sound great and expensively recorded. Where as many indie records by great bands are unlistenable by comparison. None of these bands wanted to play Jimmy's basement on tour for beer, but they were happy to do so when that was all they could get. Why call them a sell-out now? Because they were given an opportunity? I mean, I've been in the punk rock scene for fifteen years now.

**Will:** Whoa...how old are you guys?

**James:** I'm thirty the other guys are 25-30 years old.

**Will:** You've got a few more years on you then Green Day does. Do you think it's fair to say that you guys have used the underground to get where you are now?

**James:** Used the underground? No these bands were/are a part of the "underground." The music is one part of what makes the scene cool. It's not symbiotic, it's mutual I think. Now if a band rips-off people with huge guarantees and stuff, that's fucked, but by virtue of being aired on 120 Minutes or whatever killing the underground is bull-shit. If you are into the underground just don't buy the ROCKET FROM THE CRYPT CD, look into UNWOUND, FLUF, or whoever...if that's what you like. I don't see the problem...don't yell at GREEN DAY, ignore them.

**Will:** Will you guys have any videos out on 120 minutes

or headbangers ball now that you're with Atlantic?

**James:** I don't know. We're going to make some, but that doesn't mean they'll play 'em.

**Will:** Any interesting tour stories or stab-bings?

**James:** Once on

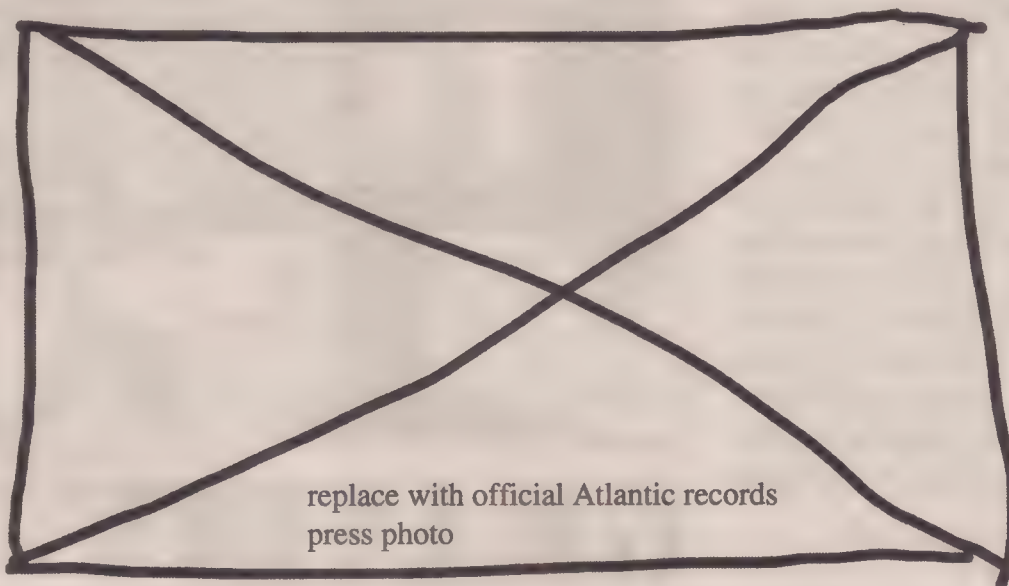
tour I swam in the Red Sea. Jason did too. I noticed for the first time, the enormity of his pee-pee.

**Will:** Do you have any last comments or denouncements?

**James:** I hope all this talk about major labels and stuff didn't make us sound like money grubbers and stuff because we aren't. We aren't the richest or most popular band and we haven't changed our minds about selling high door prices and \$20 shirts or putting out a disco album, although the word Atlantic might suggest it.

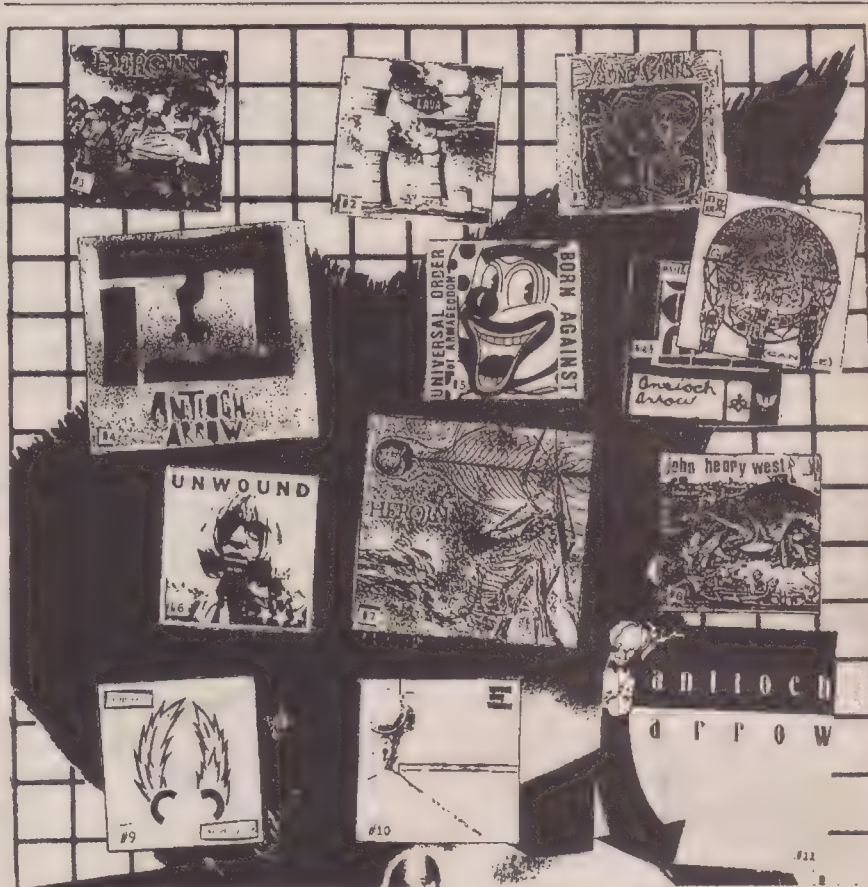
**Will:** Thanx, and where can you be reached?

**James:** 1941 University Avenue; Berkeley, CA 94704 USA. Thanks.





Matt Anderson is the "Gravity Guy" — he runs his Gravity label from San Diego, California. With eleven 7-inchers to its credit so far, covering several bands — including San Diego locals as well as such wider-known acts as Huggy Bear and Born Against — the label has gained nationwide respect. Although we both live in San Diego, Matt felt more comfortable doing an interview-by-mail for this, his first Gravity interview. I was more than happy to comply, being somewhat shy (well, okay, scared stupid) myself. Somehow it seemed even more personal — I got a very nice note along with answers to my questions and a hand-decorated envelope!



# GRAVITY

BY KAREN FISHER

**Do you run the label by yourself?**

I used to run the label with another friend, but he moved. I did it alone for a while but now I have a couple of people to help out; I pay 'em a little.

**When did you start it?**

Gravity started with the second Heroin 7" in late 1991 but was stagnant for a year after that until things took shape.

**Are you in a band yourself?**  
I'm not in a band now, but I used to sing in Heroin.

**I think the readers would like to know a little bit about how you got started with your own record label and why.**

The reason Gravity got started was because Heroin wanted to do a 7" on our own, so the bass player, Ron, and I got the \$ together and just did it. It wasn't going to be a label but we enjoyed the process and decided to do some more stuff. It just evolved and became more serious as the idea of doing something original and to document what is going on became stronger.

**I hope this doesn't sound like too much of an ignorant question, but what exactly do you do as "the label"? Pay for the pressing of the record and distribute it? Promotion? What else (if anything)?**

As a "label" we pretty much pay for all the manufacturing of the records, then worry about getting rid of them. We also do some promotion but not nearly as much as a lot of other labels.



I don't have a lot of \$ for that, but as it grows promotion will be easier. I also record bands from time to time at a home studio owned by Bob Beyerle at Vinyl Communications, another local label, and myself. I've recorded the Huggy Bear 7" and will be recording a Second Story Window 12" and just got done with the recording for a 7" by a band called Angelhair from Boulder, CO.

**Can I ask how old you are? and if you grew up in San Diego or —?**

My birthday is 3-18-72 and I am a San Diego native, except that I had a brief jaunt up to Seattle when I was 13. It only lasted six months.

**Did you used to work at KSDT by any chance [UCSD radio station; available only thru cable access] — or maybe you still do a punk show there?**

No, I never worked at KSDT, but helped Adam Eisenberg once or twice at his show, with others, mainly by causing trouble. That was when they used to have live bands play there.

**Antioch Arrow, Heroin, Second Story Window, these are all local bands, right? Now, how'd you get hooked up with Huggy Bear?**

All the bands are local and are friends of mine, all the bands put out are friends. I met Huggy Bear and had already liked and respected them a lot,

they were nice, so we recorded and agreed to do a 7".

**What about Unwound and Universal Order of Armageddon — they're not from around here (or are they)?**

Unwound are from Washington and UOOA are from Maryland. I met these bands from letters and from when Heroin went on tours of the U.S.

**I like the artwork you've done for the mailorder flyer and the record sleeves. Do the bands create those themselves or is that you?**

The artwork for the records are pretty much all done by hand, but the point is just to do something interesting and creative. It's not a rule to do them by hand. I usually come up with an idea for what I think would be a good concept and let the band do the artwork. The label does all the manual labor on the covers.

**Heroin — not to be confused with the "other" Heroin from Olympia — or am I the one that's confused?**

I have not heard of another Heroin from Olympia. We were on the Stars Kill Rock comp, if that's what you are talking about. **[Yes it was; that along with the fact that Tobi from Bikini Kill had mentioned in a little note to me that Heroin was one of her favorite bands (listing others from WA) and so I assumed they were from up there!]**

But it's a common word so there may have been a Heroin, but not to my knowledge.

**It seems your fans have noticed a certain "Gravity style," did you set out to achieve that by deciding which bands you would put out, or did it just happen?**

I personally don't think there is any one Gravity style, I think it's pretty diverse sounding, too diverse to fit any mold; it is all in the punk/H.C. vein maybe. The bands are just close friends of mine and other friends that are around making music, it's the music that I like, all things happening are coincidence or just circumstance — I just want to appreciate.

**How would you describe "emo-core"? (I was asking some people awhile back to define this term for me and they suggested I should look in my own backyard, that Gravity had more than a little something to do with spawning this term...)**

Core is just the part of the music that evolved, into the emo at one point. We didn't spawn the term emo-core. I think people that needed to categorize what was going on in D.C. and elsewhere from '85 on spawned the term emo-core. I think it's just hard music that is, to some, overtly emotional. Some of the bands that have put out records on Gravity are emotional. Actually a lot of 'em to some



degree. It's either acceptance or denial.

**I went to Off the Record in Hillcrest [popular S.D. record store and hangout] yesterday to pick up some of your releases in anticipation of this interview. But almost everything of yours I looked for was out of stock! I guess that means you're doing pretty well.**

It either means that I'm doing well or that I just am lazy. I concentrate so much on getting the records out and distributed widely that I forget to take them to stores sometimes.

**Do you have any compilation albums now or in the works? or any other happenings or releases to tell me about?**

Gravity doesn't have any compilations on the way but in the coming months we are putting out a new Antioch Arrow LP; a Universal Order of Armageddon 12" single; a 7" by Angelhair from Boulder, CO; a 7" by Mohinder of Nor-Cal; a Second Story Window LP; an LP by Klikatat Ikatowi who are from around here and are really good; and possibly a CD of all the Heroin vinyl.

**What does the future hold in store for you and the label? (I have heard nasty rumours of at least one popular San Diego indie getting snatched up by a major; can you ever see that happening to you?)**

I just rented a space for bands

to practice and for me to set up a recording studio, and I have gained access to much better equipment; this seems to be something to occupy the future. No one is interested in buying Gravity and I am not interested in selling it.

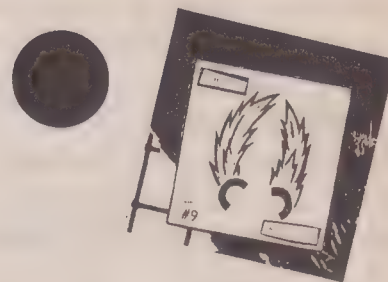
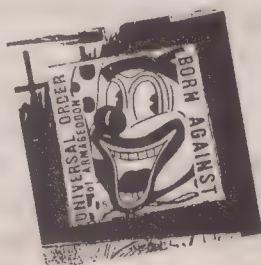
**Any other parting thoughts?**

It hurts to see another person's heart turn to stone when you know the feeling.



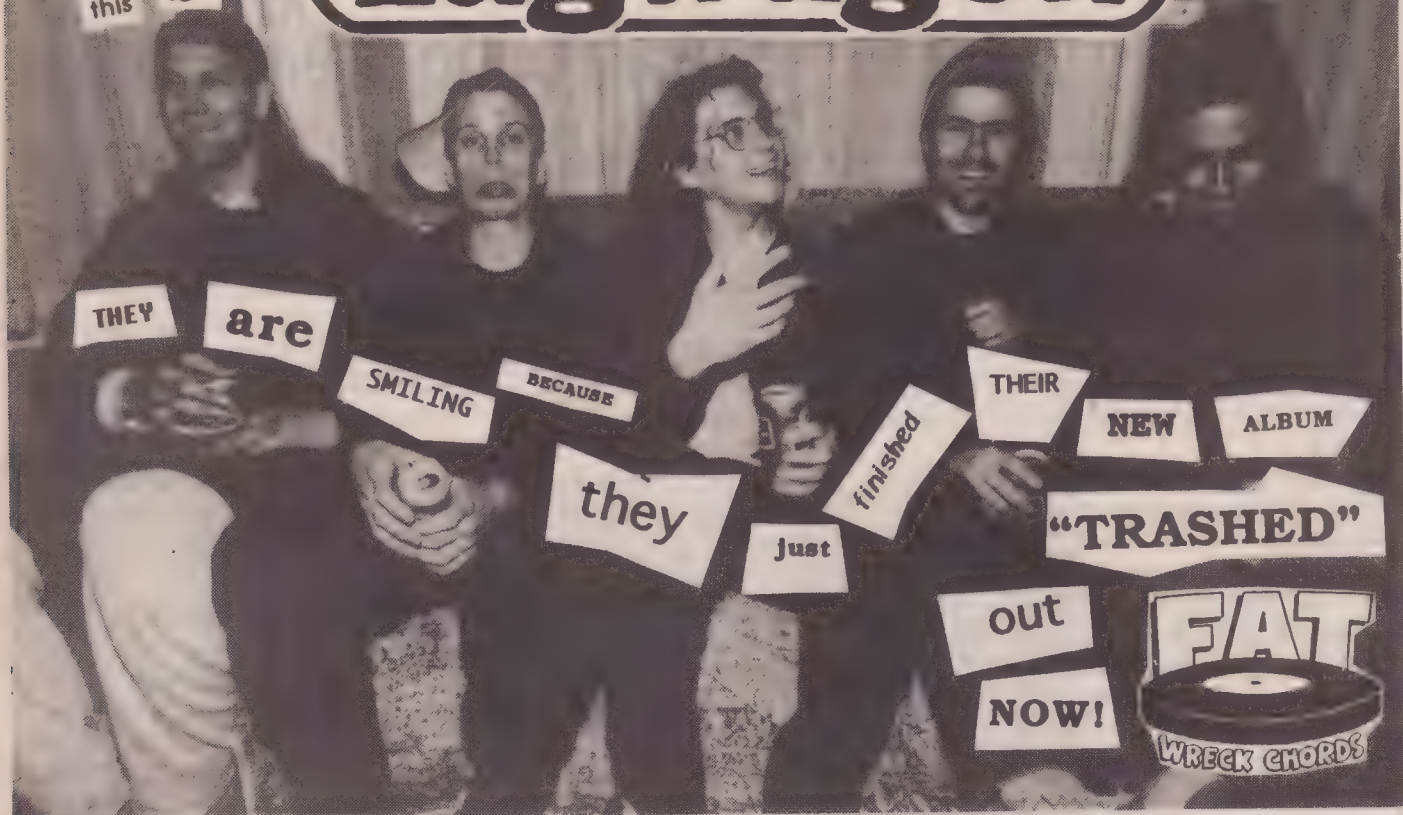
**Thanks again, Matt, for your time. You, out there, please write for Gravity's mail-order list. It looks like it's hand-screened, like the Gravity record sleeves. For local San Diego flavor, try Antioch Arrow and Second Story Window, and order the Klikatat Ikatowi when it comes out! Something tells me that he's got something special going here....**

**Gravity, P.O. Box 81332, San Diego, CA 92138**





# Lagwagon



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These bands were among the many who put out great singles on some of America's best indie labels last year. We've compiled twenty of our favorites on one nifty little compact disc. These records would cost over \$50 if they had been purchased separately, but that didn't happen because you probably couldn't find them in stores in the first place. **STOP** reading this incredibly clever ad, and order now. Thank you very much!

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# SHREDDER

Records

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# Reel Around the Fountain

by Larry Livermore

I thought somebody was rattling the screen door, but it was just the wind. A hot wind, the kind we usually get in late summer, pushing a cloud of brown dust down the empty street.

Sweat keeps running into my eyes as I shuffle around the room trying to figure out what to do first. My flimsy black suitcase sits in the corner, winking at me with bloodshot eyes. Somehow I have to fit my life into that bag, and still be able to carry it away from here.

I can smell, almost taste last night's beer finding its way out through my pores. A slight headache buzzes around the edges of consciousness, too mild to really bother me, but still annoying. A semi-comatose cluster of flies hangs just beneath the cracked plaster ceiling.

By tonight, I'll be out of here. Never mind that I haven't started packing and don't have the slightest idea where I'm going. Today's the day. It's time. Everything here is finished now.

I've been planning to leave for years. By the time I turned 18, even my family and friends were urging me to go. They were right, there was nothing for me here, but one thing or another kept happening. Before I knew it another year would have passed. Then I'd think, might as well wait until after the holidays, no sense trying to get anything done now while it's so hot, I'll just stay until I can save up a little more money.

If I cared to be honest with myself, which I seldom do, I'd admit that I stayed here because I didn't know what I'd do anywhere else. Much as I hated life here, I kept thinking of that thing Shakespeare said, about sticking with the troubles we've got instead of running out looking for new ones.

Anyway, I didn't really hate life here, at least not until recently. I just liked to give that impression. It made me seem more unique, more sensitive, more... well, the main point was that it set me apart from everyone else. Most people claim to like it just fine here. A great place to raise your kids, etc. etc...

Provided, of course, that your kids are born without a brain and are content to work minimum wage moron jobs and smile at the same handful of idiots day after day. Anybody with a shred of sensitivity or imagination is out of here the minute they graduate high school, if not sooner.

Which makes it all the harder to understand why I've stayed this long. After all, I'm an artist, supposedly. I could walk down Front Street wearing a beret and twirling a stick-on mustache, and nobody would look sideways at me. They expect me to act like that. I'm the slightly more hip version of the village idiot.

It wasn't always that way. Back in high school I used to paint pictures that anyone could understand. Landscapes, portraits, you know, all glossed over to make things as pretty as they could or should be. I won prizes every year at school, and at the state fair too.

Then my painting started taking a different turn. Technically it was a lot better, but that's not what people saw. Every time I'd show someone a new picture, I'd hear some variation of, "It's nice, I guess, but how come you don't paint those pretty pictures like you used to?"

Eventually, they stopped being interested in my work, which was fine with me. I always suspected their opinions weren't entirely objective anyway. There's no way I can put this without sounding conceited, so I'll just go ahead and say it: you see, I happen to be very good looking. People have been telling me that all my life, and even if I could never see exactly what they were talking about, they can't all be crazy or blind.

So what, you say? It's just that when you're good-looking you get special treatment. People pay more attention to what you say, they take you more seriously. Sure, most of the time they're being phony and buttering you up because they want something, but even if

they're only after your body, they still have to pay attention to you, the kind of attention that plain-looking people almost never get.

I first noticed that in tenth grade. Alvin Hicks was in my class that year, and he'd hand in these stories every week in English class that still give me little quivers all over just to think about them. If I could paint half as well as he could write, I could be living in Paris or New York and be the toast of high society, provided they still have that sort of thing.

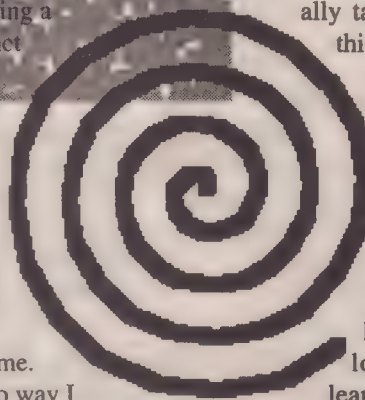
But all Alvin ever got for his pains was, "You're weird" from his classmates and, "That's very interesting" from the teacher. And I'm sure it was because he was drab and dwceebish, right down the coke-bottle glasses and the shirt tail that he'd always forget to tuck in on one side. He did go away to college, but I heard that he gave up on writing and ended up as some kind of office clerk. I would rather have shot myself.

Anyway, this story's not about Alvin or me, but about Jimmy Johnson, who for a little while managed to become the most important person in my life. I'd always sort of known him, since his family lived just down the street from mine, but I never really talked to him or anything till I was about 14.

He'd always be out in his yard working on an old blue Chevrolet that he hardly ever seemed able to get running. To tell the truth, the reason I first noticed him was that he looked so miserable leaning there under that

hood hour after hour. I couldn't figure out why he was doing it, since he didn't look like your standard grease monkey type. He looked more like he should be writing poetry, something I would later find out he did.

Since the car was such an obvious piece





of junk, I couldn't understand why it mattered to him to get it running. It's not like he needed it to get around town; it would take you about ten minutes to walk everywhere worth walking in this place.

He'd never explain what it was with him and that car. He'd just say something cryptic and half-sarcastic like, "A man's gotta do what he's gotta do," or some similar cliché. As a kid I chalked it up as one of life's little mysteries, but when I got older I decided it must have been his attempt to be normal, to fit in with the yokels. Being a poet isn't going to get you much respect in this town, and neither is working in a bookstore, which was how he earned his living.

I know he felt like an embarrassment to his parents, who were Main Street USA, right down the line. His dad was a millhand and his mom was an old-fashioned housewife. They couldn't figure out how they got such an unusual son. Sometimes when Mr. Johnson had too much to drink, he'd start speculating about how maybe the babies had gotten switched at the hospital.

Everything changed the summer Mr. and Mrs. Johnson got killed in a car crash. Jimmy kept on living in their house, only now he had it all to himself. With no one to nag or criticize him, he started getting weirder and weirder. Making him all the more interesting to me, of course.

I was about 16 then. I'd been hanging around with him now and then for a couple years, if hanging around isn't too strong a way of putting it. Usually I'd see him working on his stupid car and he'd let me stand there watching him, all the while trying to explain what he was doing, even though it was obvious he didn't have much idea himself.

Once his parents were gone I started seeing another, more interesting side of him. I'll never forget the day he first showed me his poetry. It was like he was revealing a dark, shameful secret. He took me into his bedroom, where all the drapes were closed and not a shred of daylight could get in. It was like a ritual, the way he took so long to dig out those stacks of paper from the bottom of a desk drawer and dump them in my lap.

I sat there reading for an hour, maybe more. I wasn't that fascinated, but Jimmy

was hovering over me like he was waiting for my opinion, so I kept reading, hoping I'd come up with one. It wasn't especially bad poetry, but it wasn't quite good either. It was like six of one and half a dozen of the other. On one hand he was trying to unlock the secrets of the universe and on the other he was trying to reassure his readers that, "Hey, I'm not one of those artsy-fartsy poets, I'm a good old boy who likes to work on cars and just happens to write down a few lines from time to time."

Later I was to grow fonder of his poetry, but not necessarily because it ever got any better. The remarkable thing about his writing was how much he showed of himself, sometimes to the point of embarrassment. If you had any special reason to be interested in Jimmy Johnson, it could keep you enthralled for hours. But as far as I know, I was the only one who was ever especially interested in Jimmy Johnson.

I'm not sure when things between me and Jimmy started going beyond friendship. The year I was 16, and the next year too, he used to tease me about how I was too young to be hanging around him, and how people were going to accuse him of robbing the cradle. I pretended not to know what he meant. I had some idea, though, especially when my father started yelling about how it didn't look right for me to be spending time in the house of a single man so much older than me.

I didn't take him too seriously. After all, Jimmy was only five years older, which didn't seem like a big deal. But I guess him saying things like that planted little seeds in my head, because afterwards I started catching Jimmy looking at me in funny ways, staring at me, in fact, when he thought I wouldn't notice.

I was 18, almost 19, when Jimmy and I became lovers. It wasn't anything I expected or wanted, and yet it made me feel really good, knowing that Jimmy needed me and that I could make him happy. It made me happy too, but in a strange way. Half the pleasure I got out of the relationship was thinking about what a scandal it would cause if anyone knew about it.

No one ever found out, though. It wasn't like we kept it secret for any particular reason, either. After all, we were both adults - technically speaking - and neither of us cared that much what anyone else thought. Yet there was an unspoken understanding between us to keep quiet, one that made everything seem all the more special because we were the only ones in town who knew what was going on.

Now and then someone would see me leaving Jimmy's house in the middle of the night or early in the morning, but people around here are generally too dumb or too smart to draw conclusions. They might think to themselves, hmmm, that looks a little funny, but then they'd figure we'd been up late watching videos or snorting speed, you know, normal stuff.

I was enjoying myself, but I couldn't leave well enough alone. I started telling Jimmy that things were getting out of hand, that we should go back to being just friends, that sex was complicating everything too much. But he'd look so sad when I'd say stuff like that that I'd usually drop the subject.

And we did have that one really good summer. For once it never seemed to get too hot, just comfortably warm, the kind of warm that made you want to sit outside all night long just letting the air sort of ripple across your skin. For a while, I managed to put my doubts aside and just be in love, as much in love as I imagined possible.

Around August, though, everything started going wrong again. I was feeling trapped, like I'd never be able to get away from Jimmy without damaging him or myself. Like the way I explained it to him: "The reason I'm able to stay in this town is that I know I'm free to leave it. But I'm afraid that if I stay with you much longer, I won't ever be able to leave."

"Then don't leave," he said, all serious and sincere. The weird thing was, I didn't really want to break up with him. I just wanted to be able to. And the only way I could imagine being able to was to do it now, before I got in any deeper.

That would have been that, if it hadn't been for the night the fountain came to life. I should have mentioned the fountain before, because it's where we spent so much of our



time that summer. It's a ridiculous excuse for a fountain, kind of a town laughingstock, in fact. Even though it was right near downtown, hardly anybody ever went there, making it a perfect place for us to sit around till all hours of the night.

A bit of history is in order here. Back when the first Mr. Vernon started this town, he laid out a street plan that would have everything centered around his store and gas station. Mr. Vernon was a real go-getter, and things pretty much went his way, right down to having the town named after him, but his son wasn't quite so hard-nosed. Oh, he was mayor, and had his finger in just about every municipal pie, but when George Grady came to town and opened up a new general store a block away, it put a real crimp in his style.

There wasn't enough business for two general stores, so obviously one had to go. The Vernons had always been in charge around here, so Mr. Vernon thought he could get away with anything. He put up a great big building next to his store, that he planned on getting the government to use for the new post office. He figured with his store and the post office and the gas station all right together, nobody would ever bother going all the way down to Grady's general store.

But he didn't count on Mr. Grady being smart enough to bribe somebody in the government to put the post office next to his store instead, and there Mr. Vernon was, stuck with an expensive empty building and fewer and fewer customers for his store.

One thing Mr. Vernon had going for him, though, was that he was still the mayor, and he used he used a whole bunch of tax money to build what he called the "Vernon Town Plaza." It was really just a paved-over vacant lot with a couple park benches, and its centerpiece, a concrete fountain which most closely resembled an oversized bird-bath. He thought this stunning bit of civic architecture would draw shoppers back to his side of town, but the idea backfired. People were so outraged at his squandering of public funds that they turned him out of office at the next election. Not long afterward, his store and service station went under.

Mr. Vernon moved away, and his buildings have sat vacant ever since. The block

that dead-ends in his plaza might as well be a ghost town; the only reason anybody ever comes down here is if they're on their way to the city park or cemetery, which conveniently and fittingly, are right next to each other.

To me and Jimmy, the dry concrete bowl seemed the perfect metaphor for the futility of existence, especially as applied to this sorry town. That's why it was so awe-inspiring the night we wandered down there, arguing all the way about whether we should break up, to find that the fountain had mysteriously come to life. In the hot, dusty night, the water sprayed into the air and hung suspended there just long enough to capture the refracted glow of the mercury streetlamp overhead.

I had never in my life seen water in the fountain. Mr. Vernon had operated it until he'd been turned out of office, and after that it would be turned on sporadically, depending on the mood of the town government. But this was all a long time ago, before people starting worrying about water shortages. In the 1970s it was shut off permanently.

But that night the water was flowing freely, which was especially weird since we were in the middle of a drought. Jimmy and I sat there staring at it till nearly daylight, and then we went back to his house to sleep. The magic of it was too much to ignore; for a while longer I put all my doubts on hold.

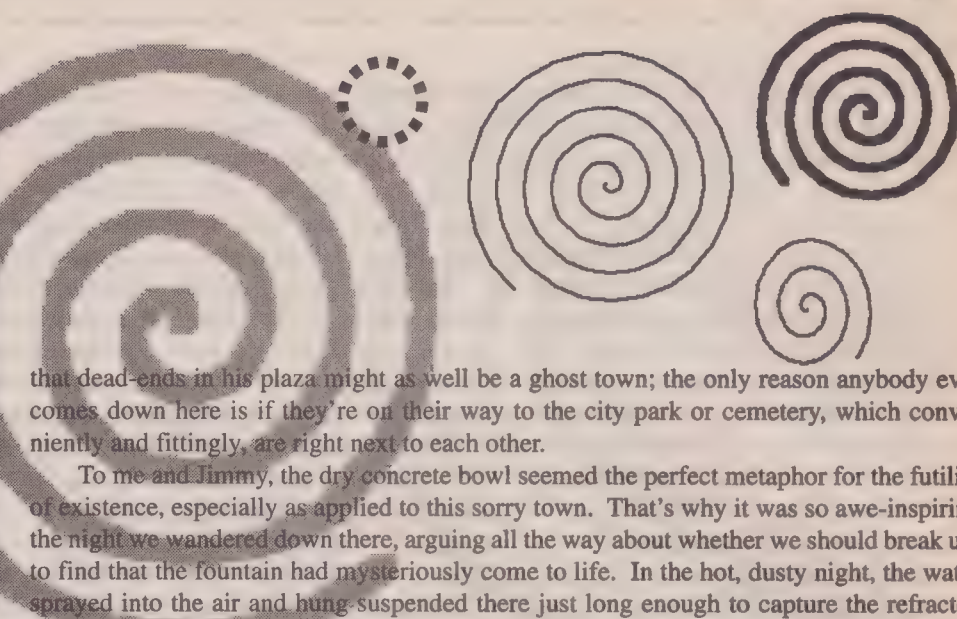
By October, though, I was back to my old incertitude, and one day when I was feeling especially wistful, Jimmy pressed me too hard about what I was thinking. I wished he hadn't done that, but once he got going, everything kept unraveling. He asked again and again if I wanted to break up with him, if I wasn't happy, and finally, almost against my will, I said yes. It was a big load off my mind, and at the same time, I felt like I'd put a great big period to the whole first stage of my life.

The weeks that followed were hard. I imagine it's easier to break up with someone in a big city, where barring unforeseen circumstance, you might not ever have to see them again. The only way you can pull that off in a town this small is to never go outside, which is what I did and what I suspect Jimmy was doing too. From my attic window I could see his house, and the lights were always on, no matter how late it was. Figuring he must be staying up all night and sleeping days, I started running any necessary errands early in the morning.

That worked, but eventually something drew me out of the house one night, call it a compulsion or call it fate, I don't care. Even though it was almost November, it was too hot to sit indoors. I wandered - where else? - down toward the fountain.

As I neared the plaza, I heard the sound of a car engine running, and every now and then, a radio playing. I peeked cautiously around the corner, and there was Jimmy's blue Chevrolet, sitting at a crazy angle in the middle of the street, with the door hanging wide open. A few feet away Jimmy, clutching a whisky bottle, was wobbily describing haphazard, drunken semi-circles around the dried-up fountain.

I was terrified that he'd see me and cause a scene, but he was oblivious to everything. I watched for a while, growing sick to my stomach, then slunk away home to bed. The next morning the news was all over town, how Jimmy Johnson had been found dead in the front seat of his car, the engine still running. The muffler leaked and there were holes in the floorboards, but no one ever knew for sure if he did it on purpose or was just too drunk to realize what was happening.





I'd never known anybody who died before, so I took it pretty hard. The funny thing was, I never gave much thought to whether I had anything to do with his death. It seems like a logical thing to wonder about, since I know he was depressed about our breakup, but somehow I always managed to change the subject when my mind would drift in that direction.

Last night I went down by the fountain again. Fatty Smith was there, just bumbling around. Fatty is sort of our one-man Parks and Recreation Department, a job he's had all his life because he was some kind of relation to a former mayor. All he ever does is water the grass in the cemetery and the park; mostly he sleeps behind the custodian's shed with a half-finished pint of some strong liquor close by.

It's rare to see him actually walking about, and unheard of to see him doing so with something resembling a thoughtful look on his face. I'd never had a conversation of more than a half dozen words with Fatty, but for some reason it seemed appropriate now. I told him how I'd seen Jimmy Johnson stumbling around the fountain on the night he died.

"It's not the first time something like that happened," he said, looking as though he were wondering whether it was safe to confide in me. "Remember when that girl got murdered, oh what was it, ten, fifteen years ago?"

It was longer than that; I only vaguely remembered hearing the story as a very small child.

"It happened right here," he said. "I was the one what found the body."

"You mean she was murdered right here in the middle of town?" I asked.

"Yeah, but it was like it is now, nobody ever came down here, especially at night."

Realizing he had gotten my attention, an unmistakable gleam entered his eyes. "Those two were high school sweethearts," he said. "You never saw two kids so close, you'd a thunk they was attached at the waist. I'd see 'em sitting around here staring at the fountain night after night, just like I seen you and Jimmy Johnson."

My face burned with shame. Had he been spying on us? Did anyone else know?

"Anyhow, that night I was just going to sleep when the phone rang. It was the mayor, and he was hollering about how come the fountain was turned on, the city couldn't afford to waste that kind of water.

"What the mayor didn't know and I did was that kids were always turning on the fountain for kicks. Back then, it was easy; there was a valve right across the street in the graveyard, and me, it didn't make me no nevermind. I wasn't paying the water bill. I'd just come around in the morning and shut it off again.

"But this particular night, the mayor was all fired up, so I said I'd go down there and shut off the water. When I got there, I seen this kid right there in the fountain, and he had his t-shirt off and was using it to scrub down the cement. When I got closer, I seen there was blood all over the place, and what he was doing was trying to wash it all down the drain. He didn't seem to know what had happened, he kept talking about how he was cleaning things up for his 'baby.' Meanwhile, his baby is lying there dead, right behind that bush over there. I was the one what found her."

Half fascinated, half appalled, I was seized with a sudden inspiration. "Fatty," I said, "would you turn on the fountain for me tonight? Just for a couple of minutes? You see, I'm leaving town tomorrow, probably for good. I'd like to see the fountain run again, just for old time's sake."

"Might be bad luck," said Fatty. "Seems like the last two times the water got turned on, somebody ended up dying."

"So, it was you who turned the fountain on that night last summer?"

He obviously knew what night I was talking about. "Yeah, it were me all right, don't know what came over me, I just started feeling sentimental or something. Kind of wish I hadn't done it now, can't help thinking that fountain is jinxed."

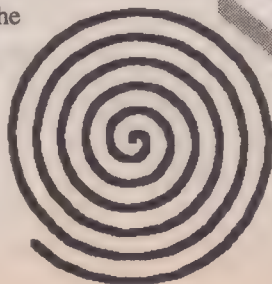
I wasn't sure if Fatty genuinely believed this, but once I got him a bottle of Southern Comfort, he happily set about activating the fountain. It was no small deal; first he had to open the custodian's shed and get out some special tool, which he the used to pry up a metal plate buried in the corner of the graveyard. Then he had to use some other odd-looking device to turn the underground valve, and it was still a few more minutes before the fountain burst into life. Fatty shrugged and disappeared behind the shed with his bottle.

I sat staring into the splashing water for a while, not that long, actually, because it no longer looked romantic or magical, just sad. When I'd had my fill, I went to tell Fatty he could turn off the water now, but he was sound asleep. I headed home and started thinking about what to pack.

Until I'd told Fatty I was leaving town, I hadn't known so myself. But now there was no doubt in my mind. Every tale that could possibly be told concerning me and this town had been told, and the longer I stayed, the closer I was to dying there myself.

For an instant I missed Jimmy; then I realized that had he lived, he would never have gotten out, and probably would have kept me from getting out too. If I ever get rich, I'm going to come back here and fix up the fountain so that it doesn't look like a bad joke anymore, and put in a water system so it can run all the time, and erect a plaque or maybe a statue to remember Jimmy by. Otherwise no one besides me might ever think about him again.

But as for now, I can't help thinking that Jimmy sacrificed his own life to save mine, or at least to make mine possible. I don't know if that's what he had in mind the night he died, but that's how it worked out. Love can be pretty great stuff, when it's not killing you.





# VERMIN

by Leah Ryan



Technically, it was a one-bedroom place. When I moved in, Francie gave me the bedroom. This surprised me. Francie generally didn't like to share anything. And the bedroom was beautiful. It was huge and high-ceilinged. I've hardly seen such a nice room since. It also had one of the only working doors in the apartment. The rest, being the bathroom door and the door between the hallway and Francie's living room, had simply fallen off their hinges. They were not smashed apart, or kicked in, like some doors. They'd simply fallen, gradually, as if they were tired. When my bedroom door began to do the same, Francie's boyfriend John fixed it for me. John was handy around the house in a strange sort of way. I knew handier people; people who would have done a neater job. But then, I would have had to ask. John just did it, without blowing his horn about it. He liked me. He had a daughter my age. He took the hinges off my door and put them back on. The door never worked quite right after that. Nevertheless, it was a door. The apartment had the kind of old filth that makes it hard to think about cleaning at all. It was futile; the dirt was ancient and everywhere. We had roaches that congregated in the kitchen heat register. They swarmed constantly beneath the crusty iron grate. The restaurant I worked in had vermin, too; not only roaches, but rats. Big, slimy river rats that climbed nimbly up the docks. We had an exterminator that came in once a week. One day I asked him what to do about roaches. He was hanging fly strips from the ceiling. He had to stand on a chair to reach. I found this endearing. He was a nice looking guy, small and pleasant. I leaned against my shiny dish machine, which I had just finished polishing. It had been a slow lunch. "Boric acid," he said without looking at me. "Really?" "Put it in your cupboards," he said. "They'll get it on their feet and then they'll lick their feet." "Then what," I asked. "They explode." On my way home, I bought a jar of boric acid at the drugstore. It didn't say anything about cockroaches on the label. Our apartment was at the top of a long, steep hill. You could see the whole town from our window. From the kitchen you could see the waterfront, which was where my restaurant was. I was pouring boric acid into the heat register when Francie came home. "What the hell are you doing?" she asked. "Boric acid," I said.

I explained about the exterminator about the cockroaches licking their feet; about the promised explosions. "Gross," Francie said. We stood for a moment and watched the heat register grate, which was now dusted with white powder. I imagined the roaches popping like popcorn, springing out of the grate. "You'd better take out the garbage," Francie said, still watching the heat register with a glazed look. "Why don't you take it out," I asked. "Because I always have," she said, matter of fact, and turned to leave the kitchen. "I took it out last week," I said quietly, to her back. "I don't mean you," she called from the living room. "I mean in general." Francie was ten years older than I was. I took this as a kind of logic that I was too young to understand. I looked again at the grate. Nothing was happening. The next day, I had to work the dinner shift. I went in at five o'clock. It was slow again, so I polished the dish machine and scrubbed the wall behind the sink. Time passed slowly. I went outside to take a break. The dock was right outside the kitchen door. The kitchen itself was a bottleneck; a slimy, narrow hole. In the summer, there were tables out on the docks and people could eat there, right on the river. The river was the restaurant's main attraction. It was attractive, sure, until a ten-pound rat begged at your table. I looked for some, while I smoked my cigarette. Even in the dusk, they were easy to spot. They made sizable ripples in the water. You could hear them paddling. They gleamed in the streetlights. There were huge carp, too, big ugly things, two or three feet long. Mornings, I threw stale bread in the water to watch them all come. That night, I didn't see any rats. I saw a few ducks, and I saw a fish jump. I went back inside, went to work on a burnt pot and sent a rack of glasses through. I figured I'd be out by midnight, easy. The fly strip was already peppered with flies, some of them still struggling. At the end of the night, after I'd mopped the floor, I got a ride downtown with the bartender. I had him drop me off at Jack's Pub, which is where Francie and I hung out. When I got there she was crammed into a booth with a bunch of people I didn't know. She knew everybody. Once a week, someone fell in love with her. Men and women, young and old, from all walks of life. People were always giving her stuff - money, jobs, drugs, cars, guitar amplifiers, you name it. I've never been like that myself. I wouldn't know how to charm somebody if my life depended on it. After I had a few drinks, I went to sit



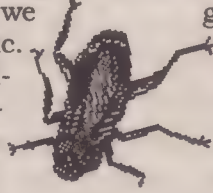
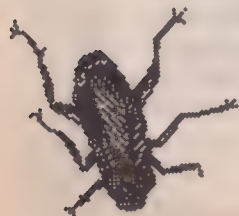
with Francie, who by now was singing Irish songs with a bunch of drunk electricians. They did that every night. Francie seemed to know the songs by heart. At around one-thirty, Francie and I left together. She was very drunk and I thought we might get into an accident. I was drunk too, and I didn't care much. Francie had been in a lot of accidents. She had a lot of scars on her face. "John planted us a garden," she told me once we were on our way. "Where?" I asked. "The backyard," she said. This was hard to picture: The backyard was a jungle of weeds. "Isn't that nice?" "Great," I said. "Don't drive on the sidewalk." Suddenly I could not remember if I had checked the stove burners and the ovens at work, which was part of my job. "Shit," I said when we pulled into the driveway. "What?" "Nothing." When we got upstairs, we cracked some beers from the six-pack I had gotten at the bar, and looked at the heat register. It didn't look like much was happening. "I think it's time we slept together," said Francie. She could hardly stand up. "Oh yeah?" I had been prepared for this. Sooner or later, Francie came on to everyone she remotely liked. I was surprised it had taken her so long. "I don't swing that way," I said, which was not entirely true, but it was an easy out. "Hah," Francie spat nonsensically, and steadied herself on a chair. Suddenly, I looked out the window, and saw that the waterfront was exploding. It wasn't just on fire; it was exploding.

You could hear it. We were silent for a moment. "What the hell," I whispered. "It's the restaurant," said Francie.

"No," I said firmly. "It's not." I was convinced, however, that it was, and also, that it was my fault. I tried to remember checking all the burners and the ovens.

I couldn't. If I hadn't passed out, I would have laid awake all night. As it was, I spent about an hour worrying. I thought about running far away, to someplace like Guam. I thought about how I'd never get to see John's garden. As it turned out, the fire had started in a warehouse. It had been full of paint and thinner and things like that, hence the explosions. The police suspected foul play, such as an insurance scam. The restaurant was totally unharmed. When the exterminator came in to change the fly strips and discuss rat removal options with the owner, I told him what I'd done with the boric acid. He was standing

on his chair, taking down a blackened, buzzing fly strip. "They don't seem to be exploding," I explained. "Well, they don't really explode, I guess. They dehydrate. Their stomachs explode." "Oh," I said. "Is it helping at all?" he asked. "It's hard to say," I told him. I realized that he had no idea what kind of magnitude I was talking about. "Get more boric acid," he said. "Use a lot. Put it everywhere." We heard a scream. There was a rat in the dining room. The exterminator leapt off his chair. A lot happened that spring. John broke up with Francie because she slept around. She didn't seem to care much. There was boric acid all over the kitchen and the bathroom. It was getting warmer; the roaches were multiplying. At work, we got a new head chef. He was psychotic. He ran into the dining room and belted a customer. He complained about the food. Sometimes he gave me big glasses of scotch and patted me on the head. Other times, he yelled at me for no reason at all. I asked the exterminator one day if he had anything we could use to get rid of a psycho chef. We got a big laugh out of that. I thought about asking the exterminator if he wanted to go drinking with me sometime. It thought better of it. The places I went to probably owed him money. Since Francie wanted no part of the garden, I took care of it myself. John must have planted it in the dark. Everything was all mixed up. I weeded until my back ached and my shoulders turned the color of weak coffee. The tomatoes got top-heavy and I staked them. Rabbits ate the spinach and the peas, but the squash did okay. Potatoes bulged under the ground. The tomatoes flourished. I pictured John, dancing around the yard in the dark, tossing seeds over his shoulder. He was small and pleasant, like the exterminator, but older. I wondered if he knew he'd be gone by the time the vegetables came in. It was amazing, I thought, that anything survived. By mid-summer, the kitchen was over-run with roaches and thoroughly dredged with boric acid. The tomatoes ripened, and the plants were attacked by little white bugs. Every day, in the hottest weeks of the summer, went into the yard and picked tomatoes. I wiped them on my jeans and ate as many as I could before the vermin got to them.





OK, I ain't gonna waist a hole lot of  
wirds talkin to Yous becaws its just  
that Your loosers and pozers, the  
wirst kind, You think Your cool cuz  
Your reeding a "punk" zine, but this  
ain't no reel punk zine, You wooldnt kno  
that tho, cuz You dont kno nothin  
about reel punk. So Im gonna tell  
Yous.

First if Yous are over 21 and Your  
not ded, Your not punk. Like 7 Secunds,  
wen they sed "Im gonna stay Yung  
untill I dye" they dint mean Your  
supposed to hang around forever  
pretending like Your punk like Tim  
Yohanan or Lary Livershit or MYkel  
Bored, they ment Your supozed to dye  
wen Your Yung. Duh.

Like g.g. Allin, lots of peepul say he  
wuz punk, but shit, he wuz 40 or  
sumthing, thats not punk, just old.  
And Jake Filth, he soled out the kidz,  
dude, he's like 25 or sumthin and he  
dont even sing punk anymore, just sitz  
around on his but drinkin coffie that  
he even payz for, he even haz a job,  
fukn pozer.

So wut ennyway, this hole zine iz for  
pozerz, ennyone can see that, so wut  
if they got a reel punk like me to be in  
char) of a cupple pagez, it dont mean  
shit to shinolea, cuz Ill be ded soon  
too cuz Im almost 21, but at leest  
wenn they burry my punk ass in da  
cold cold ground, theyll hafta write on  
my gravestone (that my frendz  
stoled from some sorry pozer in  
another grave): "he lived the kaos  
and he fukd shit up"  
how many of You loozertz can say  
that???

-Spike

## FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES ONLY

### Fun Things To Microwave

A while back I went to a seminar at a prestigious IBM  
Corporate Research Center, given by a prestigious corporate re-  
search scientist, about microwave ovens. Don't ask why, except 1)  
it was free, and 2) I was after some new ways to get in trouble at 7-  
11.

The most fun thing I learned was that you can microwave  
those cute but disgusting marshmallow creatures you get for Easter.  
You may have a few left to try this with. Put one in the microwave, on  
a paper plate, and watch \*closely\*. It does all sorts of disgusting fun  
things. What's left is kind of what you'd expect if you left your cat  
outside during a small thermonuclear event. If you're fresh out of  
marshmallow bunnys, you can just use a bag of marshmallows at 7-  
11. Just be sure not to stick around after the bag explodes and they  
start oozing out around the door.

For the Fourth of July, try microwaving a small piece of steel  
wool. If you try this at home, do it on a glass or ceramic plate that you  
don't mind destroying — don't use paper plates, since there will be  
LOTS of sparks and fire. It won't hurt your microwave but you don't  
have to tell anyone that. The 7-11 version: a box of Brillo pads. When  
to leave: before the fire department comes.

You can also put flourescent bulbs or neon tubes in the  
microwave and they'll light up. The round ones or the screw-in ones  
will fit. Nothing bad happens but it's good rainy-day fun.

-jimconnell@aol.com

The following is an edited version of several messages by  
"Pepito Pea@aol.com" Everything further is a quote with  
no manipulation of the story by me. The afterword is by  
Jim Connell (the one who took the time to compile all this)  
with a message from "Allabuggy@aol.com". I wish Pepito  
Pea could edit it himself...but for reasons you'll soon see he  
is unable to. Read on.-Will Dandy  
3/16/94

we dissected sheep brains in AP biology today.  
naturally i snagged one and zipped it in a ziploc bag. i  
carried it around for awhile, but since i already have one  
from last year i decided i would take advantage of the  
opportunity.

so me and ben schemed up plopping it in the Salad Bar in  
our cafeteria. we waited till our lunch was over and a crowd  
of people were entering and exiting so i furtively slipped  
over to the salad bar, whipped out the brain and ever so  
gently placed it in the middle of the large bowl of lettuce.  
heehee. it looked fukking hilarious! i quikkly ran to sit by  
ben in a seat across the cafeteria to watch the fireworks  
begin. the first girl (an underclassman) walks up there with  
her dish and looks at the salad bowl. we nearly die from  
giggling. then she looks around oddly and leans over and  
SNIFFS it! hahahaa. what she did next i can not fukking  
guess why. instead a screaming (like we expected her to and  
wanted her to) she ACTUALLY TOOK SOME SALAD!!!  
as if the brain was just a tidbit she dint want!!! argh. we  
couldnt believe it..



then a teacher saw it and started grinning. it was my third period psyche teacher who saw me with it. he instantly knew it was me, but he's kool and wouldnt squeal or anything. but he notified the lunch cashier (an old lady) and she nearly freaked! she started shaking and like gagging! god.. i had to run out of the cafeteria before falling on the ground laffing.. i think the cafeteria gave refunds on ALL the salad today...

3/17/94

HA! wow. ive been suddenly ejected into the lime-light again for skool! fukk. evidently the science dept dint find the "sheep brain salad" as amusing as practically everyone else did (teachers and faculty included) MY science teach is obviously the MOST perturbed. he is going insane! for two dayz in a row he has yelled at our class for 20 minutes on how he is going to "bring down the perpetrator" and make him suffer. if not he has threatened to fail everyone. bullshit.

its funny tho. no one has snitched on me thus far. lotsa people know so its sorta scary. latest i heard was if he DID catch someone he was going to have them expelled. ouch. course im taking the attitude "deny till i die." is it not the best way to go? heehee. i havent been in this sorta trouble in ages! its so funny how mad mr kolzow is. "we WILL find who did this atrocity. there is a MASSIVE investigation going on right now, and we are compiling evidence at an extraordinary rate." hehehee. geez. WHAT evidence? ah well. hope no one snitches... doubt they will. but fukk it seems EVERYONE knows (teachers have been calling me brain boy (the KOOL ones)) so its just a matter of time i guess...

of course, i do have a way out.... =)

3/21/94

mentally ive been totally stressed out! in less then seven hours i will find out if i will be EXPELLED. god.. i kant believe i may be up for an expulsion... all over a sheep's brain! <cringe>

the science dept is hot on my heels since three of my peers snitched. theyve been playing a rilly good mind game... i almost craked on friday and confessed. but then i came to my senses.. i hope my alibi holds up tomarrow... if ot i kan kiss college goodbye...

its a good thing i had a spare sheep's brain my room.. just so long as they dont test it for age i think ill be ok...

cross yer fingers for me everyone.. tomarrow is judgement day... actually im sorta eXcited since i havent been in this sorta trubble since junior high... the mental pressure is excruciating tho! if my parents find out i dont think youll be seeing me on here anymore since i can kiss my computer goodbye...=(

3/22/94

well i thought i wuz gonna be ok. mr kolzow our bio teacher made NO mention of it this morning so i felt pretty good. but UGH, sixth period i get escorted down to the dean's office by bill vice, father hake, and some other guy (obviously a security understudy). which is pretty funny considering im a tiny little easian punk surrounded by these three big lamers who are infamous for being assholes...

i sit around the dean's office for a whole period while dean fransen (my dean) is too busy on the fone. finally when 7th begins im ushered in. but usually (detentions etc) i only deal with him. i wuz hit with a funny surprise, BOTH deans sat down with me in the room. i wuz all jittery. they both stared at me for about two minutes. god. everything that happened in there was such a joke.

(if you cant tell im on the smug and confidence cycle right now)

they were down my throats! first thing outta their mouths were

like "ok. cut the shit brandon. we KNOW you did it.. blah blah blah..." of course i just sit there all innocent and whatnot admitting to only taking a brain home out of "scientific curiosity."

i could not believe the bullshit they were trying to pull...

"we have DOZENS of people who say they SAW you."

"will get you to take a lie detector test."

"the police are taking fingerprints."

i dint know they could lie. but i wuz in a weird frame of mind so i just denied everything. really threw em for a loop when i dint contest to take a lie detector test. the people seeing me bit wuz such a lie tho. ah well.

OH! big news! fukk, THIS threw ME for a loop! that day we had a substitute teacher and SHE HELPED me and another student take out a brain and put it in these plastic baggies. well get THIS. she now TOTALLY denies ever doing that! she sez she dint even kow ANY were taken! god. i kant belive she said that. what outright lies! (at least MINE are half truths!) i have a feeling she'll be in some deep shit...

well, feeling optimistic... heehee. i have SOME leverage now too. one of the deans begged me not to put it in the underground zine since he said it would "open the floodgates" to prankdom hell. >=) so if i AM busted UNFAIRLY, guess what our front page will be splattered with? <grin> well since they dint crakk me they gave me the tired bit of "well, we'll give you 24 hours if yah wanna come bak or tell us anything..." heehee. i think i won round one folks..

3/24/94

argh. the brains thing has been so fukking crazy. thot i was scot free yesterday. evidently someone REALLY close to me ratted. told him about the 2nd brain i had in my room. the one i gave him telling him it wuz the one i took home. <sigh>

today is do or die day.. i think. i mean, if i dont get busted today, do ya think theyll keep it up AFTER spring break? i sure as hell hope not.

they lie like bastards. also. the chances of them having it "age-tested" is pretty low huh?

Afterword: Around this time Pepito Pea vanished. Attempts to contact him yielded the message "Pepito Pea is not a known user". Everyone suspected the worst.

3/30/94 from "Allabugby@aol.com"

Okay, I called Pea and he's fine. He said to tell everyone he really misses AOL and hopes to get back on soon. He was about to flash a ton of e-mail to people when he found that his account was no longer active. He's a little worried about why this might have happened so he's laying low for a bit. It's still not clear whether he'll come back as Pepito or under another name, but he'll be back. Rest assured.

Still no definitive word on his expulsion. It's spring break there and he's hoping the whole thing will have blown over by the time he gets back. But the way his luck's been running...

And that's all we know... so far...

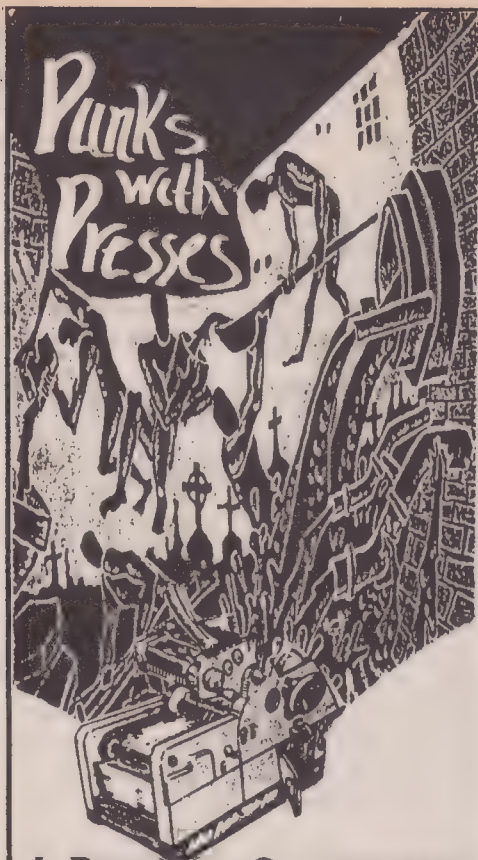
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# TOUCH & GO

HOW AN INDIE LABEL PLAYS WITH THE BIG BOYS. AND WINS.

by D. Cahr & Eric St. Clair



This is rock and roll: Inside a huge, moldering warehouse on the northwest side of Chicago, piles of records, promotional materials and boxes compete with sawdust and general construction chaos for the few spots of available space. David Yow, rabid lead singer of the Jesus Lizard, has been drywalling. "It's pretty crazy around here," says Corey Rusk, founder, owner and spiritual leader of Touch & Go records. "When we moved in here, it was far more space than we needed, and way more space than I thought we could ever use. We've gone from occupying a little tiny bit of this space to filling all of it, plus a third of another floor. When I started all this, I had no idea what this would become." Touch & Go has become a magnet, for over a decade, for some of the most important bands in America. From the Butthole Surfers and Big Black to Slint, Seam, the Jesus Lizard and even Nirvana, bands that sell hundreds of thousands of records around the world have made their home at Touch & Go. And the main reason for that is Corey Rusk. "Corey Rusk is the hardest working man in show business," said Yow, sipping a beer daintily, pinkie extended. "James Brown is second. He works harder than you can even imagine." People have developed, over the years, a highly romantic notion about the rock and roll life. They picture the limos, the paparazzi, the glamour. Almost no one ever experiences that — perhaps three dozen artists in this country today. The real

stories are much more remarkable, having required hard work, self abasement, and more patience than most of us would even consider sane. The story of Corey Rusk is an exemplar of the do it yourself spirit that has energized the American independent movement over the past fifteen years. His story is an archetype, for it's also the story of Fugazi's Dischord in Washington, DC., and K records out of Olympia Washington, and all of the other keepers of the original DIY flame. Touch & Go Records started when Corey Rusk was sixteen years old. As bassist for hammer-to-the-skull Ohio punk rock band the Necros, Rusk turned to his hero, Tesco Vee of the legendary Michigan band The Meatmen, for money to put out their first record. They named the label, originally meant merely as a vanity label for the Necros, after Touch & Go, Tesco Vee's popular fanzine. In the beginning, nothing came of it. But things changed after Corey left the band, following a successful national tour with the Misfits. "I was in the band until 1983, but it was around 1981 that I began to think 'Gee, there's all these bands out there, and now we know how to put out records...'" as if we had any clue back then. To give you an idea of how clueless we were," says Rusk, "when we put out the first Necros record, we thought, 'How many should we make?' 'Well, I don't know, how many could we sell? Where are we going to sell them?' Nobody had any idea where to sell them, how to sell them, or how

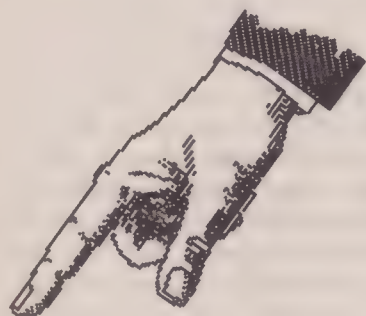
many to make, so we made 100, and we thought that was a lot. We figured we had five friends we could give them to, and Tesco had a few friends to give them to and maybe we could sell 50 through an ad in Touch & Go magazine and by taking them around to some local record stores or something. That's how clueless we were." Today, Corey sells 100,000 copies of the Jesus Lizard/Nirvana single, and has moved several hundred thousands copies of Butthole Surfers, Big Black and Jesus Lizard LPs. Yet despite these numbers, Touch & Go is run like almost no other label in America, independent or major. Few people understand the real behind-the-scenes dirt behind how a band and a label interact, and that is how generation after generation of bands get taken for a ride. In order to understand why Touch & Go is different, it is important to understand the American music industry, and how it exploits the "talent." "Corey still uses as the sole barometer of whether or not he wants to put out a record whether or not he likes the band and the record," says Steve Albini, who has worked with Touch & Go as both a band member (in Big Black) and as a producer for many of the bands on the label. "Because of that, Touch and Go doesn't bind the band contractually, which means that in order to keep working with a band he must retain their trust. There are no restrictions on any band, and they can leave whenever they want." "If a band wants to



do a record with Touch & Go, they agree to do that one record with Touch & Go," continues Albin, who was recently, much to his chagrin, named Rolling Stone's "Hot" producer of the year. "If the band is happy with the way things proceed and Corey is happy with the way the band behaves itself, naturally, they will continue to work together. There's no effort made to treat the band as though they are a corporation that has to be bound contractually. The bands are expected to behave honorably and he is expected to behave honorably. None of the bands on the label have managers.

the early to mid 80s, (Husker Du, Sonic Youth, Black Flag, Bad Brains, Minutemen) had, by the end of the decade, suffered substantial financial setbacks and has recently been the subject of a number of lawsuits by former bands. Seattle's Sub-Pop, the home of modern grunge, has long had a reputation for not paying their artists — punctually, in full, or at all — though this has changed since the windfall of Nirvana's success. Rough Trade, the largest of all independent distributors, went into bankruptcy two years ago, dragging countless bands and labels down with them. And there's one of the most prominent labels of the mid-'80s, Homestead. Rick Sims, leader of the Didjits, tells of his first experience with an independent label: "Before we were on Touch & Go, we decided to have Homestead distribute our first record [Fizzjob], and they didn't give a fuck about us. We never saw any money, and Cosloy [Gerard Cosloy, former head of Homestead, now the head of Matorador/Atlantic] was being a big smartass about it, telling us 'oh, you got to talk to this person,' and 'no, you've got to talk to this person,' and 'bye.' And I told them, 'Look, either give me my records back or give me my fucking money.' So about this time I got to know Steve Albin, and I asked him, 'Why can't these people pay me? What do I have to say to them, what do I have to do?' So he told me, 'Listen, I'll call them up, and tell them to give you your money. 'Basically, what happens with these people is this: If I give them 500 copies of a lowly Didjits record and say 'sell these for me,' they don't have to worry about giving me money. It's not like they make so much money off of me, and it's not like I'll be withholding a whole bunch of other Didjits albums from them if they don't pay me. But if a big seller like Steve Albin calls up and says, and this is what he did for us, he told Homestead 'pay these

guys, or you won't be distributing Big Black stuff anymore,' that's the only way you can get anything out of these guys." If Rusk and Touch & Go never fell into the traps that snagged so many others, it's partially because of his strong, working class background: he did this because it was what he wanted to do, not because it would be some kind of glamour profession. After the second Necros album, Rusk took a job in a lumber yard to finance putting out more records. At other times, he and his then-wife Lisa worked delivering pizzas all day, and worked on the record business while



There's no one to interfere in between Corey and the band. There's direct communication, and the bands don't feel that they are being protected." This is, needless to say, somewhat unusual in the music business. The problems and conflicts that arise between major labels and their talent are well documented. Bands are commonly bound for seven and eight albums, making them, essentially, indentured servants. Artists as prominent as Neil Young, Don Henley and George Michael have, in recent years, been involved in high profile lawsuits against their record companies. But even independent labels aren't immune. SST records, one of the most prominent punk labels of

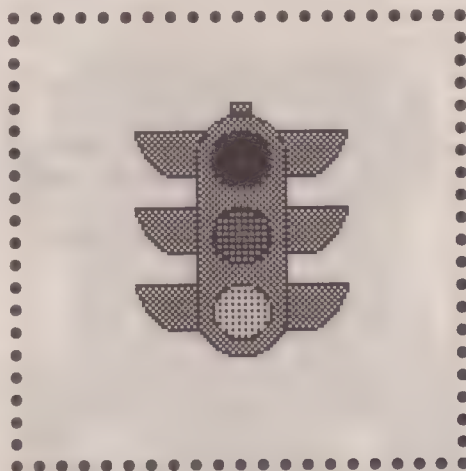


running a club in Detroit. Their bands would even sometimes live with them for awhile — including the Butthole Surfers. "When I first met them, they were at the beginning of their homeless phase, where they had nowhere to live for a couple of years and lived on the road without a place to go home to. So, they stopped in Detroit and stayed for two or three weeks, which was great. They were really nice people, and we got to know them and agreed to put out their records and became their home away from non-home. They'd come by pretty regularly. It was great." The family image projected by this story seems somewhat out of whack with the public perception of bands like the Butthole Surfers.



(Really nice people being one of the last descriptions one would use to describe a band that releases albums like Rembrandt Pussyhorse or Creamed Corn from the Socket of Davis.) But that close feeling extends to even to the present day, where David Yow helps Seam build the racks for their touring van, and builds offices for the label. Where bands like the Didjits refer to Corey like a friend rather than a boss. As Rick Sims told Maximum Rock and Roll, "Corey always hugs us when we leave." This is, needless to say, not the case at most labels, major or indie. And the big indies can sometimes be the worst of all. Many bands long to be on some of the larger indies, thinking that they'll get the street credibility of an independent with some distribution clout. But some of the more ambitious independents, according to Albini, merely end up combining the worst aspects of major labels and indies: "When it's to their advantage to behave like big labels, they do. That is, whenever there's something that they don't want to do that they might feel obligated to do if they were acting on a handshake basis, they fall back on the old contractual obligation ruse. They'll say, 'Well according to our agreement with you, that's not something we have to do.' When it's to their advantage to behave informally, that is as if it's a handshake agreement, they do that as well: 'Well I know we're supposed to pay you your royalties by a certain date, but things have been really crazy here what with Earth Day and all so you're just going to have to bear with us.'" This is not atypical. Almost every band we talked to had some horror story or another to tell of label machinations done in order not to pay them royalties. "Touch & Go is a very good label because it is run in a very business-like fashion, which a lot of other labels can't find it within themselves to do," says David Sims, bass player for the

Jesus Lizard, as well as its illustrious forerunners Rapeman and Scratch Acid. "And they're very straightforward about being business-like. When you first start talking to other labels, they will always, always, promise you the moon. Bands inevitably are disappointed in what they get. What happens, especially with major labels, is they promise them all of this tour support, big advances, big recording budgets, and they never tell the band — and somehow the bands never wise up to the fact until it's too late — that they're talking about spending all the band's money.



They're talking about guaranteeing the bands will never get paid other than in the form of a big stupid bus they don't need on tour and all these stupid deli trays while they're recording that they don't need. Corey, on the other hand, is very forthright about that," continues Sims. "He says 'look, this is what we need to do to turn a profit on this record. If you want the deli trays, this is how much it's going to cost, and this is how many records you're going to have to sell to pay for them. Do you want the deli trays or do you want the money from those records. Then, it all becomes very easy.'" Albini agrees that the deception of bands is in fact worse where major labels are concerned. "The major label per-

spective is that in order to woo a band away from an independent label that's been treating them well, they have to offer that band something that the independent label can't offer them. So what they offer them is the option of spending a huge sum of money, which is the band's [royalty] money anyway. The band, feeling flattered by this, goes to the major label, and is then in the position of being in debt from their very first second of existence on the major label." "The books are so cooked, that is, the royalty rates are so minuscule, and the number of deductions so great, that it's virtually a sharecropper arrangement. It's virtually impossible for a band to earn a living from selling records, and that's the reason the major labels stay in business." Albini provides the following illustration, to explain the slimy world of the music business: "Let's say you're in a band, and you sign to a major label, and they offer you \$200,000 as an advance and recording budget for your first record—that's about average. Let's assume your royalty rate is [a standard] 12% of the retail price of every record that's sold. [The major label] is going to want you to use a 'name' producer and name producers virtually always charge a couple of points, sometimes as many as three points. A point is 1% of the retail price of a record sold. Those points, generally speaking, come out of the artist's royalties. So, if you do what the record label asks, and you use a 'name' record producer, and that producer gets paid an advance of \$75,000 plus 3 points, you have to pay, as part of your recording budget, \$75,000 and you lose 3 of your 12 points on every record." It should be mentioned that Albini may be the only producer of note who refuses, in all cases, to take points on a record. "A lot of major labels will not deal with a band unless the band has a management company, they won't deal directly



with the band. Say the manager charges [a standard] 15% of your band advance and royalty income, then the actual recording costs, that is, all the money that's been spent up until that point, has to be deducted from your income from then on out. You're going to have to earn, in royalties, something like \$300,000 in order to pay off the initial \$200,000. Once you've done that, after you've sold, say a quarter of a million records — You're broke. You haven't made a cent. Your record company, on the other hand, has cleared profit on every record sold, because they don't care if your royalties are disappearing into a black hole, they have to pay that money anyway. So if that money gets recouped within their own spending scheme, it doesn't matter, because they weren't going to keep that money anyway." So are bands able to earn a living by touring constantly? "There are ways that bands get robbed on tour as well. The band [may have] a booking agent that charges 15 to 20%. Let's say the record company pays for advance and special record promotions; as tour support, let's say they give you cash money to support your tour bus and all this other bullshit. You're going to be obligated to have a lot of "handlers" and technicians on the road with you — all of this has to be paid directly out of your income. It's quite reasonable for a band to work their asses off, and generate an income for the music industry in the millions of dollars and still not get a cent themselves." "Bands are gullible. There's a new population of bands every couple of years that want to be flattered in this way. They want to think that the record company is behind them. That flattering notion is what allows the record companies to keep the deck stacked in their behalf." "One of the main reasons we're still around is because I'm an absolute fanatic about account, about budgets, about keep-

ing track of everything we spend," says Rusk. "I can think of nothing more embarrassing than being unable to pay a band its royalties." Touch & Go pays its bands in a unique fashion as well: After costs, the profits get split 50/50 between the band and the label. So even if you sell only a relatively small number of records (like 20,000) you can make a pretty decent amount of money. This generous royalty system has been key in drawing bands like Tar away from other independents and keeping some of the big sellers, like the Jesus Lizard, at Touch & Go when they could easily



leave for a major label. Some bands that are already on major labels wish they were on Touch & Go, and have gone out of their way to record there. For example, there's Nirvana. "This is the demo tape horror story of all horror stories," says Rusk ruefully. "I've always been a big fan of Nirvana, and I decided to see them at this Sub Pop showcase in England. While I was there, Mudhoney introduced me to Kurt [Cobain], and I told Kurt how much I liked "Bleach." He said 'You're kidding!' as though he was in awe of the fact that I liked it. I didn't understand why, until he explained that, when Nirvana had first formed, for the first year of our existence, the only label we wanted to be on was Touch & Go, and very early on he had sent us a demo. I

don't remember hearing the demo, so I don't know if the sound quality was so bad that I didn't hear the good songs underneath, or whether I didn't get it or what, but it makes me sick to think about it." But Nirvana didn't forget their early love of Touch & Go: When the Jesus Lizard suggested doing a joint single with them, to come out on Touch & Go, Nirvana jumped at the chance. At the time, Nirvana was a nobody band on Sub Pop—but when they hit the big time they didn't forget, forcing their record label, DGC, to go along with it. The single went top ten in England, something that will probably never happen again with Touch & Go. And when Nirvana was chosen this year to headline the influential New Music Seminar in New York, they chose the Jesus Lizard to open the show. And Rusk no longer even limits himself to Touch & Go. He's added another label to the roster, and distributes four others. So the family of Touch & Go labels has grown to encompass Drag City (Pavement, Royal Trux), Merge (Polvo), Invisible (Murder, Inc.) and Trance. The new label is 1/4 Stick, currently home to such widely varied acts as Ramones look-alikes Pegboy and bluegrass bohos The Bad Livers. 1/4 Stick also put out Volcano Suns' final record as well as the Rollins Band's live album Turned On. "1/4 Stick started right after I moved in here to this warehouse, after my marriage to Lisa, who's no longer involved with Touch & Go, went on the outs. The idea with Touch & Go had always been to put out music by bands we liked, and by bands we thought were nice people to deal with. But sometimes the situation arose where I dealt with people who I really liked, and I wasn't totally into the music they were doing, but I could see that it had some sort of validity, that I could respect it even if it didn't turn me on. I wanted to have an outlet for that kind of music without having



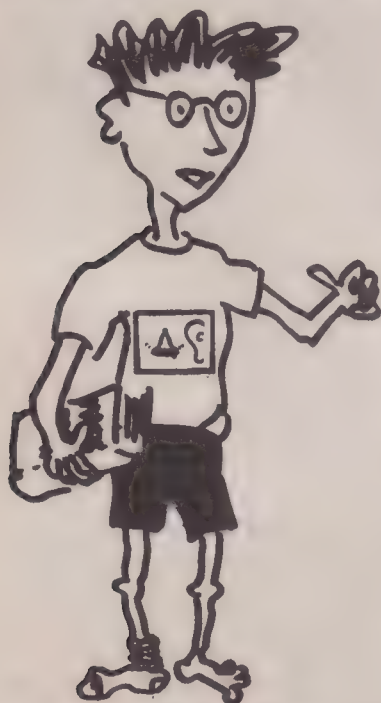
to fuck with the ideas we had for Touch & Go. I don't, however, know how it got to the point its at today. Whether a band is suitable for Touch & Go or 1/4 Stick is really a feel thing. It doesn't make much sense anymore, but for some reason I just know." In view of that zen approach to label management, it seemed appropriate somehow to ask Albini what he thought all of the bands on Touch & Go had in common besides the fact that Corey liked them. "There are some people that are in rock bands because they find it a vehicle to celebrity and there are some people that are in rock bands because they think that they are creative geniuses and they need their ideas expressed to the world. There are other people that are in rock bands because they think that fundamentally that is a noble thing

to do and a good thing and a valid thing. That tends to be more of the attitude of the bands on Touch & Go. They are in bands because they see that as a valid pursuit in life — not because that's what they're doing at the moment. It's not a means to an end and it's not a hobby." So Young Park of Seam sounds a tad more cynical as he muses on Touch & Go and the future of rock. "A lot of music in that same genre we're in - the indie rock genre - is fairly stunted. It's recycled. Hopefully, we're doing it a little better, but it's not like that Gang of Four record that came out in 1979 [Entertainment]; it's not like something totally new that shocks people. Maybe that music's being made by somebody else. There's probably some kid out in the suburbs somewhere who's listening to all this stuff and saying

'This stuff sucks! This is not what music is all about.' And that person is going to form a band or make music that will be truly great." Until then, there is Touch & Go.

How was it that at the age of nineteen was Rusk able to recognize bands that would prove to be so popular? Actually, the secret of Rusk's success appears do have been his utter disregard for the market's opinion of anything he puts out. He puts stuff out because, above all else, he's a fan. "When I was in the Necros," says Rusk, now 28 years old, "die kreuzen opened for us in Milwaukee, and I thought they were amazing. I thought to myself, 'these guys are fucking great, I want to put out their record.'"

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# The D.I.Y. Files F

## How To Put out a Fanzine part one

There are a number of factors to think about when undertaking the task of putting out a national punkzine (or any zine for that matter). Since I have been brooding over all of them for the past month and a half, I decided to write this issue's DIY column. Normally, I hope that this space can be written by someone else, who has knowledge about how to do something in punkdom. For this issue, that someone is me. Anyway, back to the topic at hand.

So you wanna put out a fanzine? The first reaction of most zine makers is to put together their layout (a whole column could be devoted to that alone), then shuffle on down to the local copy store and seam their way to 50 or so copies.

"The first Lookout zine, in October 1984 consisted of four pages, and I xeroxed 50 copies at the local feed store, the only place in our small Northern California town that had a xerox machine at the time. I had copies spread all over the bags of manure, collating them as I went along," says Larry Livermore who works on the Lookout fanzine. Now he ships approximately 10,000 32 page issues of his zine. Obviously, the local feed store couldn't handle that kind of volume, he had to go elsewhere.

So where to go? If you just want your zine offset printed, you can probably go to the print shop in town, and show them what you want, and they'll give you a price. This price should be dramatically lower than Kinkos could charge. Not only is the price cheaper, but the final output looks nicer too! If the people local print shop are mean, or if you just would feel better knowing that your money is being spent in the punk community, contact Punks With Presses. Their prices are EXTREMELY competitive, and they are punk owned & operated. Give them a call. Tell 'em we sent ya.

Your other option is to go Newsprint. "I chose to use newsprint because it is cheap and recyclable," says Larry. There are more reasons than that though. Wind Chill Factor, a Chicago based Anarchist zine moved from xerox to newsprint because it weighs less. That made it cheaper to mail than their old, xeroxed zines. Another reason people choose to print newsprint, or at least offset zines is that often, copy scams eventually run out. Either the staff at the local kinkos begins to catch on, or you begin to print such a volume of zines that you would have to spend days at the copy store just to finish all of them. At that point, you realize that it is cheaper to get your zine printed at a print shop than at Kinkos, where a double sided page typically costs twelve cents.

There are some things that you need to know about Web printers (that's the fancy name for printers that do newsprint -some sort of Spiderman fetish is my guess) before you approach them. "usually the minimum number of copies you can do is 1000, and you have to use a multiple of 8 pages (16, 24, 32, etc), since the press prints and folds eight pages at once," says Jim Testa who puts out Jersey Beat Fanzine. The costs for newsprint zines can vary a lot. You typically need to call a web printer, tell them what you need to do, and they will work up a quote for you. This helps to shop around, since you can do it from the comfort of your own home. Be prepared to call out of state, there aren't even close to as many Web printers as there are offset printers. Also rural web printers may be cheaper than ones in cities. Says Larry, "MRR is printed at Howard Quinn in San Francisco. They charge about 60 to 80% more [than where the Lookout zine is printed] because of the higher costs associated with being a business in San Francisco."

Once you've gotten your zines printed, you need to start looking into distribution. We'll look at that next issue, since at this point Punk Planet has no distribution. Hopefully by then, I'll know more about it.

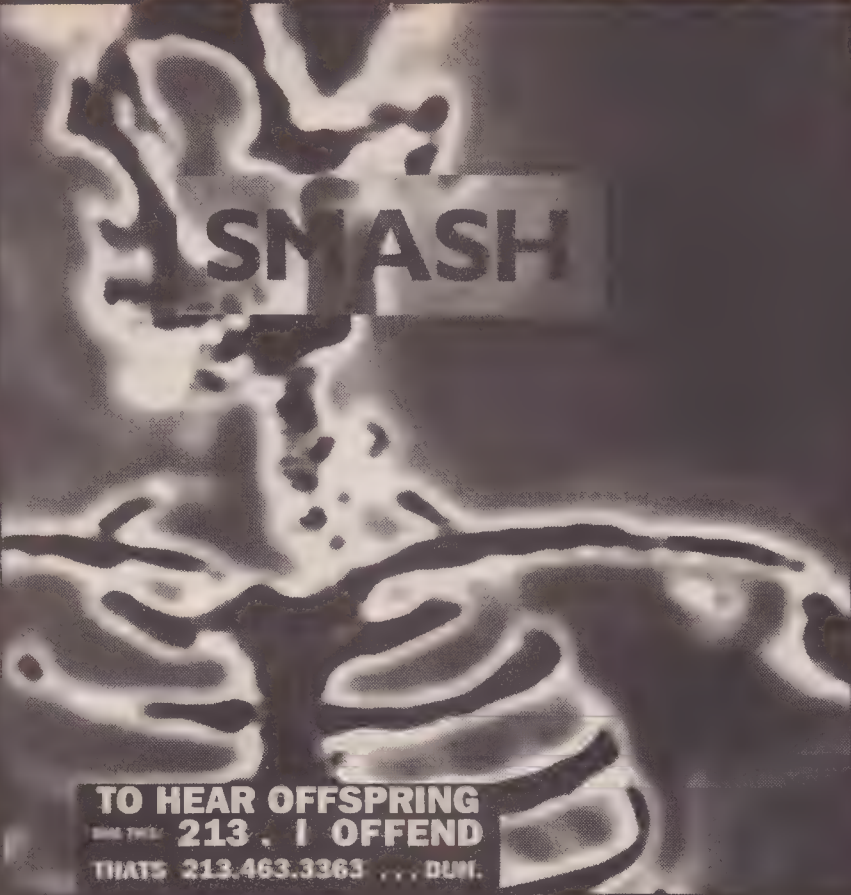
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These are albums that were sent to us to review by cool people or albums that we own (that's why we like most of them). If YOU have something you want reviewed see the contents page for details. Reviews marked "BANNED" are ones that "Maximum Rock n Roll" will not review. Reviewers are: Darren Cahr (D.C.), Julia Cole (J.C.), Steve Cook (S.C.), Will Dandy (W.D.), Dave Larson (D.L.), Matt Random (M.R.), Dan Sinker (D.S.), Dave S. (D.S. 2) Bret Van Horn (B.V.)  
-Will Dandy (Why did I have to review almost all of these?-sheesh.)

**88 Fingers Louie-Go Away!, 7"**

This album is cool. It reminds me of what would happen if you mixed early NOFX with Cringer. Melodic hardcore with poppy and meaningful sounding vocals (I don't know if the words are meaningful, there's no lyric sheet). It's pretty typical of Fat Wreck Chords, but not really, it's a bit of a branch out. The vocals are the main thing that make this band stand out as a really good release. The background is ok, but nothing inventive. On the whole a really good record, four good long songs. (W.D.)

(Fat Wreck Chords; P.O. Box 460144; S.F., CA 94146)

**Angerhouse-This is Not Rock and Roll, double 7" BANNED**

I could probably write this whole review just on the packaging of this 3 song double 7", which is ingenious to say the least. Probably not many people have heard of Angerhouse. They haven't played since the Winter of 1992/93. One may wonder why a record recorded in 1992 would be released now, in 1994 for a band that no longer exists. I have to admit, I had my doubts. Now I know why. If this had been released when it was recorded, there is not a doubt in my mind that Angerhouse wouldn't be one of the hottest hardcore bands around now (instead, we have Earth Crisis, go figure). This is raging, angry hardcore. With two singers, some really catchy riffs (supplied by Eric Funk from Billingsgate), completely right on lyrics, and the one of the best packaging jobs I've seen in recent years, this is a MUST HAVE. (D.S.)

(Mustard Music P.O. Box 581245 Minneapolis, MN 55406)

**Jello Biafra and Mojo Nixon-Prairie Home Invasion, LP****BANNED**

Get ready for the hoe-down Pa, we're gonna rock the ole barn down to-night! Country, beautiful country music done by Jello and Mojo. This is a classic. The songs are about abortion, imperialism, liberals, and the Lord almighty God. I can imagine farmers doe-see-doeing to it right now. It's got that old time country feel to it, not the new Garth Brooks stuff. It's got banjos, accordions, and pianos, so you know from the beginning-this is real punk rock. (W.D.)

(Alternative Tentacles; P.O. Box 419092; San Francisco, CA 94141)

**Blownapart Bastards/Resol, Split 7"**

Both of these bands are really amazing. They have the throw-yerself-in-the-pit, smash your head, smash the state, straight forward, fast, punk down. They both remind me some of Born Against, and some grindcore, with maybe the very slightest of a hardcore feel for the slow parts (which aren't very often). I can't help but feeling the urge to sing along to these songs because they posses that rare quality of being able to blow you away musically with how fast, powerful and moving it is, but you can still catch the lyrics. You gotta love sing-along punk. This is highly recommended. (W.D.)

(Mambro Records; 5808 Timberbridge Dr.; Raleigh, N.C. 27609)

**Brand New Unit-Under the Big Top, LP**

This is nice catchy punk which is not really what I expected it to be. It's still really good, and reminds me of Samiam if they played a bit faster and replaced their regular singing with shouting. This band has all the melodic hooks and breakdowns though. It is powerful melodic punk that has a bit of a dreamy edge to it. Recommended for those times that you stare at the ceiling thinking about important stuff. (W.D.)

**Bratmobile-The Real Janelle, 12" EP**

Girl-punk. Acoustic-punk. No bass, just one guitar with no chords-punk. Lyrics to cry to-punk. Cover of a misfits song still with no chords and acoustic-

punk. Too bad they all live in different states now-punk. Highly recommended for girl/grrrl punk listeners/enjoyers. (W.D.)

(Kill Rock Stars; 120 NE State St. #418; Olympia, Washington 98501)

**Bum + Smugglers-Tattoo Dave split 7"**

Both bands play light catchy pop punk in the vain of the Parasites. Then they team up (the Bumglers) and cover a Rolling Stones song live. This is a very nice 7", good to fall asleep to (not in a bad way), just relaxing. (W.D.)

(Top Drawer; 1912 Franklin Ave. E.; Seattle, WA 98102)

**Butt Trumpet-Primitive Enema, LP**

Well, GG Allin is dead. So what can we do? Get this Butt Trumpet album instead. Talk of fucking girlfriends best friends, having dead dogs in garages, and of course, primitive enemas. Cool, down and dirty music. They always make you wanna laugh. And they also make you wanna hit your head with a pole. (W.D.)

(Hell Yeah; P.O. Box 1975; Burbank, CA 91507)

**Buzzoven-Unwilling to Explain, 7"**

This is their best stuff. Oozing, swirling mesh of guitars with screaming vocals. Very bassy. They move like a throbbing, pulsating entity off the turntable. This makes me want to explode. Very droning, very cool. (W.D.)

(Allied; P.O. Box 460683; San Francisco, CA 94146)

**Capitol Punishment-Messiah Complex, LP**

This is a very strange release. From what I can tell, it is two members of the original Capitol Punishment, with one added person. Thing is, there is no singer. So instead of packing it in, (like most bands would) CP goes & records an album with two different guest singers. The music isn't half bad, kinda a punk/hardcore mix circa 1985. But the vocals are horrible. The first 2/3's of the album are sung by Jimi Haze of Hell's Kitchen, and he, simply put, sings like Fat Albert. The last 4 songs are sung by someone else, who doesn't do a half bad singing job but writes some of the worst lyrics that I have ever read. This release is souly for Capitol Punishment fans, even then, it may get grating. (D.S.)  
(We Bite America P.O. Box 10172, Chicago, IL 60610-0172)

**Clikatat Ikatowi-Casette**

For some time now CLIKATAT IKATOWI has been one of the most popular bands in San Diego with its members from Heroin, 411, and Candle. Their first tape exceeded all of my expectations and is truly incredible. This recording captures some of the extreme intensity displayed at their live shows and is filled with powerful emotion and creative instrumentals. This is one of the best tapes of the year, so if you like any of the bands that the members of Clikatat were in, then you will probably love this tape. (D. MUSCONE)

(Gravity Records P.O. Box 17052 San Diego, CA 92177)

**Crain-Heater, LP**

Using a tuneful blend of emocore, pure noise, and Jawbox, these guys burn it out. Hypnotic punk rock rhythms that kept me bouncing in my seat. As my dad said, "They can play their instruments." Quite well, in fact. It's very powerful, they feel almost like Dischord stuff except noisier, and faster. A good buy. (M.R.)

(Automatic Wreckords; P.O. Box 4759; Louisville, KY 40204)

**Devil Dogs-Get on your Knees, 7"**

Neat, catchy, snap yer fingers to the beat, punk rock, garage music. Singalong



choruses to boot. They remind me what of what would happen if Supercharger and the New Bomb Turks collaborated on a song. The title track however reminds me of the Beatles and straight forward rock and roll. (W.D.) (Sympathy For The Record Industry; 4901 Virginia Ave., Long Beach, CA 90805)

**Devil Dogs/New Bomb Turks, split 7"**

They each cover each others songs. The Devil Dogs cover sounds exactly like the New Bomb Turks original. The New Bomb Turks cover is cool and funny. They call it the disco mix, for no real apparent reason. They make it sound like one of their songs. (W.D.) (Helter Skelter Records; 00162 Roma Italy; Piazzale delle Provincie, 8)

**Disgust-Brutality of War, LP**

Ex-members of DISCHARGE play DISCHARGE-like tunes except faster. It's pretty good, but sometimes loses that catchy element of the real DISCHARGE. It's fast and heavy. Overall, it's a good CD, with some unnecessary soloing and little metal riffs. Pretty nice CD. Did I mention DISCHARGE? (M.R.) (Earache, 70A Greenwich Ave; NY, NY 10011)

**Doc Hopper-Aloha, LP**

Doc Hopper has sneering, droning, pizzicato guitars. Their cover of "Homeward Bound" is so hysterically fast it makes me all dewy-eyed and nostalgic for The Feelies' version of "I'm a Believer." Doc Hopper can also be refreshingly melodic, witness the intro to "Melcher." As for lyrics—well it's surprising how moving the phrase, "I saw your soul" can be when repeated over and over again for 12 moody, feedback-laden minutes ("Post-Letterman/Tuesday Morning 4 AM"). It was sort of like taking an afternoon nap next to a window opening onto a traffic jam. (J.C.) (Ringing Ear Records; 9 Maplecrest; Newmarket, NH 03857)

**Don Caballero-For Respect**

Don Caballero, some wacky guys from Pittsburgh, is a brutal mixture of Fugazi, Rush and Slint — and yes, you read that correctly — without any irritating vocals to distract you from their awesome power. In fact, there are no vocals to distract you from their awesome power — they're completely instrumental and proud of it, dammit. Incredibly tight, with an almost jazz-like ability to move into weird, fucked up modalities and time signatures, but with a propulsive thrust and dynamic that would have frightened Dizzy Gillespie into an epileptic seizure. Not, in other words, your typical band out of Pittsburgh, though I can't really say there's such a thing as a typical band out of Pittsburgh. In fact, I am almost completely ignorant when it comes to the subject of bands out of Pittsburgh. If they all sound like this, however, I'm moving there immediately. Standout track: "Bears See Things Pretty Much the Way They Are." What the hell are you standing there for....? (D.C.) (Touch & Go Records, P.O. Box 25520 Chicago, IL 60625)

**Eggs -The Government Administrator, 7"**

Definitely a strange release, from a strange band. Eggs serves up slow, bluesy, loungey, subtle songs. The kind of thing that you hate, and then find yourself haunted by in the shower. This release is no different. Find it and judge for yourself. I like it, but I've found myself in the minority quite a few times on this one. (D.S.) (Hemiola 35 Bernbrough St. Burley, Leeds LS4 2QY UK)

**Endpoint/Sunspring-Written In Rock, Split 7"**

You've got to give them credit. Splashed right across the cover it says "The Songs of Rick Springfield". The liner notes are basically a complete RS discography (plus a quick diary from the Endpoint/Sunspring 1993 Tour). And guess what? The bands play Rick Springfield's songs, or at least two of them. Endpoint's rendition of "Jessie's Girl" is great, but that may be because I liked the song way back in 1983. Sunspring's rendition of "Love Somebody" leaves something to be desired, but still captures the original's flavor. (D.S.) (Slamdeck Records P.O. Box 43551, Louisville KY 40253)

**Facts About Rats-I Don't Wanna Get Involved with You, 7"**

In the same group with Screeching Weasel and the Queers, these guys churn out the shit. One song co-written by Joe King of the Queers. This is a classic and these guys will be around for awhile I can tell. They are really good Ramonesy punk. (W.D.) (Stanton Park Records; P.O. Box 58; Newtonville, MA. 02160)

**Frumpies-Babies and Bunnies, 7"**

Sounds a lot like Bikini Kill. In fact it is with a different singer. It's pretty cool, there are two good songs and two OK songs. This isn't as good as Bikini kill, but its close. (W.D.) (Kill Rock Stars; 120 NE State 418; Olympia, WA. 98501)

**Frumpies-Safety First, 7"**

The Frumpies bowl me over this release with a BALLAD! Yes, they take a break from their signature noisy, fast, screechy sound (there's plenty to please on this release too) to deliver an absolutely great, slow, lovely song. Perhaps that's why I'm so taken with this band, there's no telling where they'll lead you. For those of you that don't know, The Frumpies are an offshoot of Bikini Kill, and although some comparisons can be made they more than stand on their own 10 legs. (D.S.) (Wiiiija Records 130 Talbot Road, London W11 1JA)

**G-Whiz -Hook, LP**

Something about this record reminds me of The Doughboys - Like these are all well written, well played pop-punk songs, but I'll be damned if even after repeated listenings I can remember how any of them go. Not to say that this isn't a good record, it is. It's just none too memorable. (D.L.) (Medical Records 61 E. Columbus Ste. 102 Phoenix, AZ 85012)

**Haggis-When You Laugh... , 7"**

Two songs from an Idaho band (on yellow vinyl to impress all yr. friends). This is nice; the singer has some Marshall-amp sounding distortion to his voice and the band is tight. "Model Glue," the B-side, builds up some velocity and is probably the better song, but "Cornfield Girl" has a strange fascination that might from the driving guitar or the picture of the murdered girl (found in a cornfield, duh) on the sleeve. (S.C.) (Screwball Productions, P.O. Box 752, Boise ID 83701)

**Hi-Fi and the Roadburners-Demons of Wicker Park, 7"**

"Hey you got your rockabilly in my Victory! You got your Victory in my Rockabilly!" This conversation must have happened when the Hi-Fi & the Roadburners came out on Victory records. This is a rockabilly band. A good one at that. Really good. Then again I know NOTHING about rockabilly, but trust me. The best thing is, it's on Victory the label known for its metal/straightedge releases. It's great, it should throw a lot of Victory fans for a loop. (D.S.) (Victory Records P.O. Box 146546 Chicago, IL 60614)

**Hoover-The Lurid Traversal of Route 7, LP**

This may very well be another record that MRR refuses to review. Sounding mildly like Fugazi only slower and well..... better. These are songs that stick in your mind and refuse to leave. Some are so simple (the song "Electrolux" is comprised of exactly one riff) while others are unbelievably complex. The sound ranges from extremely melodic music & vocals, to noise and screams. This definitely ranks up there with some of my favorites. (D.S.) (Dischord 3819 Beecher St. NW Washington DC 20007)

**Huggy Bear-Long Distance Lovers**

This is the best Huggy Bear release to date (rumor has it that it's also their last), which is a very, very hard thing to be. It's noisy like many Gravity or Kill Rock Stars releases, but it's way better. This one has trumpet and a song about vampires!! Huggy Bear makes me do the mashed potato. This probably isn't the worlds most objective review, but I don't even care. Buy or Die.(D.S.) (Gravity Records P.O. Box 81332 San Diego, CA 92138)





## Jawbreaker-24-hour Revenge Therapy, LP

This is like a mix between Unfun and Bivouac, leaning a bit more towards bivouac. The lyrics get more confusing and metaphoric every album. Impossible to describe if you haven't heard them, the best I can do is: pulsing, music with a spontaneous feel, mid-tempo, makes you wanna close yer eyes, stare at the clouds, and daydream. Very good! (W.D.)

(Tupelo-Communion Conspiracy Theory; 290-c Napoleon St.; San Francisco Ca 94124)

## Karp-I'm Done, 7"

Really good, hard, slow, powerful stuff. I have some other stuff by KARP, but I think this is by far the best. Sort of reminiscent of the MELVINS in parts, but better. It never drones, and it never gets boring, unlike some similar stuff. Great record. (M.R.)

(Kill Rock Stars; 120 NE State St #418; Olympia, WA 98501)

## Lagwagon-Trashed, LP

This is a really great record. This is totally cool So. Cal. melodic hardcore a la Bad Religion, except better. Fat Wreck Chords seems to be putting out the very best of melodic hardcore lately, and this is another great one. This was just as good as (or better than) their last release. The lyrics are just as cool as the music, an A+ all around. If you are into the NOFX/Bad Religion type of music, this is vital. (M.R.)

(Fat Wreck Chords; P.O. Box 460144; S.F., CA 94146)

## LDK-Up From the Back, Cassette

Not bad, and it certainly feels punk rock. In parts they sound like a sloppy hardcore band trying to cover Nausea, and in others they break into melodic hardcore not unlike Guttermouth with a different vocalist. The only thing I don't like about it is the solos, but they are minimal. Overall, it is a very good tape, and something I enjoyed listening to. (M.R.)

(LDK; 11725 Blue Smoke Trail; Reston, VA 22091-3728)

## Los Gusanos-S/T, 7"

Pretty catchy punk here. It's light but it doesn't have the melodic hooks that usually accompany such music. It's got CJ Ramones in it too. It's pretty good and sounds like a little bit lighter version of the Ramones. Recommended for Ramones fans. (W.D.)

(Vital Music Records; P.O. Box 20247; New York City, NY 10028)

## M.D.C.-Thanks for Giving Me What I Didn't Want, 7"

I had always wanted to hear MDC. This rules, they are fast punk with regular distortion (i.e.-your ears wont implode) with fast lyrics too, but not gruffly sung. Laid back fast music. The second song is clearly the best. The title track is pretty cool, but the lyrics don't really match the guitar in the verses. It's still really cool. B-side is a county song true to the original by Johnny Cash. (W.D.)

(New Red Archives, Address not on Record)

## The Mr. T Experience-Our Bodies, Our Selves, LP

This is a pretty good pop punk record. While not up to par with the Gun Crazy 7" (which is on the CD) the record is still good, mellow pop punk. Although the lyrics are a little on the depressing side (in a happy, poppy way?), this is an altogether enjoyable release. (M.R.)

(Lookout; P.O. Box 40185; Berkeley, CA 94701)

## Murphy's Law-Good For Now, EP

This is a five songer from New York's infamous Murphy's Law. It serves up some new stuff, which sounds a lot like old stuff, and some old stuff which still sounds the same. It's good, but it's certainly nothing new. Is that bad? (D.S.)

(We Bite America P.O. Box 10171 Chicago, IL 60610-0172)

## My Life in Rain-This is your Ballistic Helmet, 7"

This is really good. It's bouncy and powerful at the same time. I t

combines emo, Lagwagon, and Crimpshrine, with great results. This one had me boppin' all night long. Punk rock D.I.Y. (M.R.)

(50% Records, 12516 Stable House Court, Rockville, MD 20854)

## Naked Violence/Amygdala-Split 7"

Well, Naked violence is very good. They are simple four chord punk with yelling/pissed of vocals. I cant think of anyone to compare them to. If you turn it up LOUD it could be born against (well, almost), that's the only band that comes to mind. Amygdala on the other hand is very bad. Their sound is like an industrial song and a joke rap, that is annoying even though it tries to be funny. Combined it's a good record, but only listen to the first side. (W.D.)

(Warning Records; 1517 Western Avenue; Suite #191; Chicago Heights, IL 60411)

## Native Nod-Bread, 7"

Great melodic emo-core from these guys. It's like a cross between Current and Iconoclast with the guy from Fugazi playing guitar. For some strange reason, I couldn't stop bobbing my head for almost 5 minutes after I finished listening to this. Towards the end it reminds me of Jawbreaker's song "Bivouac". For the whole family. (M.R.)

(Gern Blandsten; 305 Haywood Drive; Paramus, NJ 07652)

## No Empathy-They Want Whatever, LP

Cool stuff. The only way I can think of to describe it is that its like Screeching Weasel except it's less melodic, and doesn't have the Ben weasel style vocals. Bad way to describe it, but I cant think of a better way. It's cool. The CD also has their first release on it-an added bonus. (W.D.)

(Johann's Face Records; 479-164; Chicago, IL 60647)

## Parasites-Last Caress, 7"

This is funny. A misfits cover by the parasites. Very strange. It sounds odd, much more bassy then their regular stuff and with whining vocals. The flip side is a classic pop-punk song in their usual style. Light floating melodies with catchy hooks. (W.D.)

(Shredder, No address listed on Record)

## Propagandi-How to clean a couple of things, 7"

The first song is a new one about getting back at cops. Its cool, but the other side is "stick the flag up yer goddamn ass....." straight off the LP. With only one new song I cant say that it's really worth \$4, but its a damn good song. For those unfamiliar with the band they sound like NO-FX and those other Fat Wreck Chord bands. (W.D.)

(Fat Wreck Chords, P.O. Box 460144; S.F., CA 94146)

## Pull-Regret, 7"

This is powerful grinding slower hardcore punk. They have a sound similar to other Southern hardcore bands like Load and Nail. Lots of bass drum and bass guitar, and basically pissed off vocals. The singer sounds sort of like Lee Ving from Fear in an abstract way. It's pretty good, and definitely listenable. (M.R.)

(Stiff Pole Records, P.O. Box 20721, St. Pete, FL 33742)

## The Queers-Live in Chicago, 7"

Cool boot of the Queers continuing their three chord punk rock. It has songs from all of their previous recordings. The sound quality is pretty cool too. I would recommend this for fans of the Queers. Although I must admit I don't think I'll listen to it very often, it is still good, just not a stand out album by them. (W.D.)

(V.M.L.; P.O. Box 183; Franklin Park Illinois 60131)

## The Queers-Too Dumb to Quit, 7"

Everyone's favorite band brings back some songs from ten years ago and rocks out with old Wimpy. Really good stuff, not like the Lookout release though, more of the older style (wonder why...). This is 3 chord at its finest. "Fuck You"



may become my anthem. (W.D.)  
(Joe King/The Queers; P.O. Box 1201 North Hampton, NH 03862)

**Rain Like The Sound of Trains-Bad Man's Grave, 7"**

**BANNED**

"Bad Man's Grave" kicks off with a bass line that reminded me of the "Seinfeld" theme song. Nonetheless, this is excellent stuff. "BMG" is the better song, fusing strong singing, good lyrics, & an almost-catchy melody, but "Cw/A" is groovy too. Get it now and annoy the folks at MRR. I listened to it three times in a row while reading my William Vollman book, if that's any recommendation. (DOOMSDAY)  
(Dischord 3819 Beecher St. NW Washington, DC 20007)

**Rain Like the Sound of Trains-What I Want, 7" BANNED**

An all star cast heading up this DIY groovecore band, via Washington DC. Ex-members of Verbal Assault, Beefeater/Fidelity Jones, and now, Soulside (with the addition of Bobby Sullivan). The sound is groovy, rhythmic, danceable rock ala Fidelity Jones. The words and ideals are PUNK. "Washington Bullets" is a redone Clash number, done with much panache- just like the whole 7". (B.V.)  
(Rebel Music: 1725 Irving St NW, Washington, D.C., 20010)

**Rancid-RadioRadioRadio, 7"**

THIS RULES! This is the shit. Rancid's best stuff is right here, get it quick, quick. The fastest bass in the west keeps on rumbling, and walking all over the fretboard. The gruff vocals and nasty guitar are there for four cool songs. This is a must have. (W.D.)  
(Fat Wreck Chords; P.O. Box 460144; S.F., CA 94146)

**Rocket From the Crypt-UFO UFO UFO, 7"**

You got yer typical RFTC sound here, big guitars with lots of little guitar noises, heavy rhythms, and the almost trademark noisy vocals of Mr. John Reis, all slapped together in a catchy little seven inches of punk ecstasy. A-side, "Birdman" is a relatively slow concoction of noise and melody, while B-side, "UFO UFO UFO" ounds like a bastardized Jerry Lee Lewis song, with it's tinkling piano in the background and it's twisted classic rock and roll changes. I'm convinced that these guys are fast on their way to becoming the best damn major label punk band ever... even if they are big shots now. (B. V.)  
(Merge, P.O. Box 1235, Chapel Hill, NC, 27514)

**Saidchild -Crush-CD5**

Imagine that 2 ex-members of Undertow form a new band influenced by such things as Morrissey, James Dean, and hair grease. Mix these factors with the previously mentioned individuals hardcore roots and what you end up with is Saidchild. There are two ways this could have come off, and fortunately for all involved this adds up to be a very unique and enjoyable release. This is Emo, but not in the traditional sense. (D.L.)  
(Overkill Records P.O. BOX 20224 Seattle, WA 98102)

**Sam Black Church-Let in Life, LP**

I expected to like this since I've been liking more and more hardcore, but I was quite disappointed. The band is really good and I like it a lot except for the singer. The vocals seem to be taken from a metal album or something. They are long and drawn-out and just get fairly annoying with the music. There are a couple songs that are really cool and are sung well with the music. The rest of it pains me to listen to and feels like a heavy metal album. (W.D.)  
(TAANG!; P.O. Box 51; Auburndale, MA 02166)

**Sam Black Church-s/t LP**

If Black Sabbath were around today (well I guess they are, but I mean the old I-am-Iron-Man Sabbath) they would probably sound EXACTLY like Sam Black church. If that's your bag, you'll probably like it. (D.S.)  
(TAANG! P.O. Box 51, Auburndale, MA 02166)

**Shellac-The Rude Gesture — A Pictorial History, 7"**

Steve Albini, man about town, has finally left his perch behind the boards and returned to his guitar. Last heard ripping it up with Rapeman and Big Black, the legendary (and we know how he hates that) Steve is back with new cohorts, Todd Trainer (ex-rifle sport) and Bob Weston (ex-volcano suns) as his rhythm section, and making noises not that dissimilar from the shit he used to do. Actually, I love the shit he used to do, and I love this new shit too. However, let it be said that Shellac is one hell of a lot better live than this single demonstrates. They recorded the stuff before going out on tour, and they're a lot tighter now. This is more a document of a band in progress than a completed project, though it kicks my ass pretty hard. If I were you, I'd wait until the album (being recorded as we speak with legendary (that word again) midwestern punk producer Iain Burgess) that's supposedly coming out on Drag City sometime later this year. But look for it — these youngsters might make something of themselves someday. (D.C.)  
(Touch & Go Records, P.O. Box 25520 Chicago, IL 60625)

**Shiner-Slightly Polished, 7"**

Shiner, from Victoria, B.C., Canada, plays lively, soulful, melodic punk with a tinge of that new school hardcore sound thrown in for good measure. The standout is the expressive vocals, which are growling one second and crooning the next. At times, reminiscent of some old Skate Rock comps I used to love, this first release shows a lot of promise. Great live band, as well. (B.V.)  
(Slow To Burn Records: P.O. Box 8386, Victoria, B.C., Canada, V8W 3R9)

**The Shitbirds-Oh Joy!, 10"**

This was a surprise. Very treble-y music. Female singer and everything sounds about an octave higher than most music is. They do a couple original surf songs and cover the Angry Samoans (Not of this Earth), Fear (Beef Balogna), and the Hard-ons (There was a time). Cool covers true to the original...just higher. Cool. If you couldn't tell...I liked it. (W.D.)  
(Sympathy For The Record Industry; 4901 Virginia Ave., Long Beach, CA 90805)

**Sicko-You Can Feel the Love in This Room, LP**

This whole CD reminds of Mr. T Experience, except possibly even better. This is one of those records that you just have to play over and over again because it makes you happy. This album is addictively great! It's bouncy pop punk, yet not even close to wimpy. A must. (M.R.)  
(eMpTy; P.O. Box 12034; Seattle, WA 98102)

**Sinkhole-Groping for Trout, LP**

Sinkhole deserves points for their album title alone. I hope it's not a sexual reference. Sinkhole sounds sort of like The Ramones on Boston. Short, rapid-not-rapid punk with some mainstream clichés thrown in. They have the pumped up energy that impels involuntary pogo-ing in the listener. The song, "Never Is Now" in particular induces a yearning for the dark, jostling confines of some hole-in-the-wall club. I shamelessly prefer Sinkhole's "Come Sail Away" to the textureless original. (J.C.)  
(Ringing Ear Records; 9 Maplecrest; Newmarket, NH 03857)

**Slave State/Lack of Interest, Split 7"**

About half of the time I like this kind of music, and this is one that I like. It's on slap-a-ham and that's probably all I need to say. But if it isn't enough...The guitar is blistering and incredibly fast on both bands sides. The vocals of Lack of Interest are slower and more with melodic (still tough though...don't get me wrong), while slave state's vocals sound like some shrieking while being electrocuted. Highly recommended. (W.D.)  
(Slap A Ham; P.O. Box 420843; San Fran., CA 94142)

**Sleeper-Preparing Today for Tomorrow's Breakdown, LP**

Quickly following up their recently released 7" on Allied Recordings, New York gods, Sleeper, have crafted several melodic-tinged and emo-style hardcore



sounding punk songs for your enjoyment.... Songs range in styles from All-esque power-pop, to Bad Religion style harmonies and sing-alongs. Rumor is, they flew in Bill Stevenson and Stephen Egerton to record this thing in their drummer's basement. That factor, mixed with John Lisa's commanding vocal talents, and tricky dual-guitar melodies, create an exceptionally slick sounding piece of wax... Hey, when's the tour? (B.V.)

(Excursion: P.O. Box 20224, Seattle, Wa, 98102)

**Spore-Giant, LP**

Spore does it again except this time it seems a bit different. The are a bit less in-yer-face style this time and depends more on a flowing song then the shouting and more direct basic music of the last release. It's slow punk that at times almost reminds me of the few cool parts of Nirvana, then it saves itself by switching away from it a little. This album is good, but not as much as their last. The vocals are the best part of this record. (W.D.)

(TAANG!; P.O. Box 51; Auburndale, MA 02166)

**Stretch Arm Strong/Bedlam Hour-Split 7"**

Stretch Arm Strong do semi-melodic hardcore with a definite early-NOFX influence. The singer sounds more hardcore, though. They are pretty good, however, and by the end had me humming. Bedlam Hour start out metally, but go into Lagwagon-esque type melodies. It sounds a lot like So. CA melodicore with a metal edge. Overall, this split record was pretty good, and I'll definitely listen to it again. (M.R.)

(Koogle Records/Stretch Arm Strong; P.O. Box 8826; Columbia, SC 29202)

**Ten-O-Seven-You're Cool, LP**

These guys have been around forever... They play happy, poppy, punk, with an old school tinge kinda like if the Beatles would have been a punk band. Lots of catchy sing-alongs and choruses that'll stick in your head, and come to mind at the strangest, most unsettling moments. Ten-O-Seven has carved a sound all their own, a fact, growing even more evident on this, their second L.P. (B.V.)

(Excursion: P.O. Box 20224, Seattle, Wa, 98102)

**Undertow-Stalemate, 7"**

Unbelievable. Excellent. These are the words that this record brings to mind. Undertow is one of the finest hardcore bands in existence and this just goes to show it. A solid guitar in the background with shouting vocals that are start-stop sometimes and yelling fits in others. This record has some nice calm parts to it, and others that are totally brutal, and it rocks all the time. This is a phenomenal band, not to be missed. (W.D.)

(Excursion: P.O. Box 20224, Seattle, Wa, 98102)

**Undertow-At Both Ends, LP**

Man, these guys sure have progressed since I saw them play their first show as Refuse about five years ago... Now, with their most recent lineup, Undertow brings you full-on Seattle Straight Edge hardcore, the way it should be. Pummeling riffed, pained vocal, heavy rhythm sectioned, arrangements from the first track, right down to the last note. The tight production by Seaweed's Clint Werner wraps it all up into one tight unit. (B.V.)

(Excursion: P.O. Box 20224, Seattle, Wa, 98102)

**The Vindictives-Party Time for Assholes, 2 X 7"**

Classic vindictives snotty punk. They cover a bunch of old songs that I mostly don't recognize, but that doesn't matter because it's so good. Great to sing along to, even if one can not even approach Joey's oddly amazing voice. Awesome stuff. (M.R.)

(Selfless; 2157 Pueblo Drive; Garland, Texas 75040)

**Voodoo Glow Skulls-Who is, This is?, LP**

WOW! I was taken aback by this. I read reviews comparing this to NOFX so I bought it. Not at all like that. They are regular punk guitars with hardcore vocals and ska horns. This is amazing. What I really like is that the horns are

always there and are an equal part of the band that is always present, whereas usually they are given the spotlight, or shoved into the background. This is VERY good. (W.D.)

(Dr. Strange Records; P.O. Box 7000-117; Alta-Loma, CA 91701)

**The Wretched Ones, CD**

All the 7"s on one CD. This is unbelievable. Beer guzzilin', boot stompn', sing-a-long, cool punk rock. This is one of the coolest bands out there in my opinion. They keep it very easy and '77, but at the same time it rocks your world like nothing you've ever heard. I believe they're all new takes of the songs too. Buy it. (W.D.)

(Headache Records; P.O. Box 204; Midland Park, NJ 07432)

**V/A-Fallen Upon Deaf Ears, 10"**

Cool record for only \$3. An amazingly cheap price for one of the coolest comps in a while. Eleven bands, twelve songs. Screeching Weasel and the Vindictives probably have the best new tracks on there. Well worth the money. (W.D.)

(Skull Duggery Label; 77 Scituate Avenue; Scituate, MA 02066)

**V/A-Revive Us Again, 7"**

This 8-song single gets big kudos for the packaging; clasped hands and purported songs like "Jesus is on the main line" and "I've been running for Jesus" made me a bit wary when I actually saw what it was that I bought. This is a international (US, UK, Australia, Belgium) compilation from a Belgian label. Most of the songs suffer from too much testosterone & could use a bit more melody, but the single is saved by Man Is the Bastard's two spooky sonic nuggets & an excellent song by Medicine Man ("Table scraps"). Worth the \$3. (DOOMSDAY)

(Machination Records c/o Jeroen, PO Box 90, 8500 Kortrijk, Belgium)

**V/A-Tommy, 7"**

This is an odd record. All the Tommy songs done in some variation (except Pinball Wizard). The other side is (I'm told) a Beatles tune, which is done, well, uniquely too. I'd listen to it, but I'm not sure I would buy it. Very strange, hard to listen to often, but a neat novelty. (W.D.)

(Vital Music Records; P.O. Box 20247; New York City, NY 10028)

**V/A-Misfit Heartbeat, 2 X 7"**

This is a really cool, genuine, totally D.I.Y. comp. with mostly sloppy pop punk. There's PINHEAD GUNPOWDER, PLAYGROUND, WYNONA RIDERS, JERRY MITE, DELIGHTFUL LITTLE NOTHINGS, POT VAL-IANT, RHYTHM COLLISION, and BITCHCRAFT. The standouts are Playground (with their upbeat Nuisance-like stuff), Wynona Riders (with their patented snot-nosed pop punk), and Rhythm Collision (with their rad cross of Screeching Weasel and Pennywise). Overall, it's a pretty good record if you're into this kind of stuff. (M.R.)

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If you want us to review your zine send us a copy to the address listed in the front of this zine. The fanzine reviewers are as follows: Karen Fisher (K.F.), and Jim Testa (J.T.). Jim gets a lot of zines apparently...

## 394 OCONEE #3

Many, many years ago, Pattie was on the staff of the very first issues of Jersey Beat. Nowadays, she's the editor of this well-written R.E.M. fanzine. Pattie collects interesting articles about REM from other publications, rounds up news and gossip, interviews the author of an R.E.M. biography, and isn't afraid to voice her aggravation at the band's penchant for re-releasing the same song in a lot of different formats (something she sees as exploiting the legions of devoted completists among R.E.M.'s fans.) (J.T.)  
(Pattie Kleinke, PO Box 1026, New York NY 10023 \$3)

## ANNOYANCE #6

A well written half-size punkzine, no photos to speak of but good interviews with Sloppy Seconds and Pounded Clown, reviews, and an editorial about whether turning 20 makes the editor too old for the punk scene. Hey, kid, I have T-shirts older than you are! (J.T.)  
(Vassar College Box 3092, Poughkeepsie NY 12601 \$1)

## ARROW OF TRUTH #7

This is technically the fan club newsletter for the band AntiCupid but in fact this little half sized has more good articles than most of the "real" fanzines I get three times its size. There's a piece on slampit etiquette (read it, bonehead!) news on other PA bands, an article on finding inner peace, and over 400 synonyms for the word "cool," which I intend to use as a reference for months. Yeah, this is definitely cool... I mean, "kickin' boss." (J.T.)  
(33 Naomi Ave, Landisville PA 17538 SASE)

## BOREDOM #3

Davey from Berkeley is a modern day hobo as well, and in this issue there a lot of advice concerning free transportation via hopping trains or hot-wiring an old VW, and tons of traveling tales. Ooh! also a short interview with Bikini Kill. My favorite part is the letters section which includes some nastygrams from what must be by now his ex-roommates, and the gem of the bunch from Davey's grandmother which begins with polite grandmotherly small talk and proceeds directly to ask Davey when he's going to stop being such a loser and go back to college. I have a well-respected (?) straight job and my grandmother still asks me this! I should show her this zine and maybe she would shut up. I am still reading this one, there's lots in there. (K.F.)  
(There's no price on the front but I'd say \$2 or \$3 should cover ya. Boredom, P.O. Box 12501, Berkeley, CA 94701.)

## CARTER #6

This is a series of comic strips, mostly about a loser named Brandon who takes crack and doesn't seem to realize what a doofus he is. I can't say it's actually funny but doper types might go for it, especially if you laugh out loud at Ace Backwards. (J.T.)  
(1239 NW 22 Ave, Miami FL 33125 \$1)

## CHANGE #3

Editor Pat fools around with the layout this time around,

running some of the pages lengthwise. Reviews, columns, lots of great photos, and interviews with SNFU, The Cows, Blacktrain Jack, and Rancid are the highlights. (J.T.)

(% Patrick West, Trinity College #104, Hartford CT 06106 \$1) (This address is only good until May 1, by the way.)

## COMETBUS #31

This is the first issue I've ever read of this, what must be the classic punkzine. Aaron Cometbus gives you the continuing saga of his life and times, with an A+ for penmanship. Boy, does he have some great adventures. I'm sorry I missed the older issues, especially the story about touring with Crimpshrine in a Ford Pinto. I only wish I could say something bad about this zine because everyone else loves it so much, and I hate to be a bandwagon-jumper, but for a week I read it every night and couldn't stop till I was done. Now I can't stop thinking about him or what he's doing now. Actually, I kept wondering how in the hell he could have a girlfriend while traveling all over and never talking to her (well, never writing about talking to her). That is such a typical female thing to think, I know. Maybe that's just a story for another day. (K.F.)

(Send for Cometbus now and send me back issues if you have them \$2.50 ppd. thru Wow Cool, 48 Shattuck Sq., Box 149, Berkeley, CA 94704 OR Blacklist Mailorder, 475 Valencia St., San Francisco, CA 94103.)

## COOL BEANS! #2

I got so excited when my copy of Cool Beans #2 arrived in the mail. It was so big and fat! Chock full of entertaining reading material, I am still referring to it, it gave me days of pleasure perusing its contents. The theme of this issue is "Head Injuries," but luckily for me, Ms. Squeamish of the Century, there are not too many gruesome stories. There's interviews with Seam, Jon Spencer, Bob Mould, lots of little stories, and good zine and record reviews. I like reviews like these, completely subjective without all the analytical and comparative references. Matt just tells you why he likes something and that's that! In case you don't know already, the editor of this zine, Matt Kelly, runs a computer bulletin board of the same name which is music-oriented but contains other topics of interest to the underground subculture (whatever that is). If you have a computer and a modem, call Cool Beans! to check it out - 415 648.7865 (648-PUNK), even just to say hi. I am seriously thinking of moving to the Bay Area just so I can sign on every day without the toll charges. Whether you have a computer or not, though, you should get the zine. (K.F.)

(Cool Beans! I think it's \$2 ppd., 249 Duncan St., San Francisco, CA 94131.)

## THE DANCE OF DAYS #1

A straightedge hardcore zine. Lots of good photos, an excellent zine reviews section (tons of zines I'd never heard of), lots of show and record reviews, and an interview with Eye For An Eye. Vis a vis the major label debate, they reprint Polygram's merchandising memo for Quicksand's Slip CD with the caption: "Your identity has been sold out." I've got news for you

- indie labels send those things out to retail stores too. (J.T.)

(Adam Tanner, Box 622, New Milford CT 06776 \$2)

## DIE EVAN DANDO DIE #1

Jeff Fox, onetime editor of the hilarious Maximum Rock N Raoul, returns to zinedom with a vengeance, taking on the notorious king of alternative bubblegum, Evan Dando. Besides an Evan Dando quiz (What would be the funniest? a. Evan ages badly, b. Evan gets laryngitis, or c. Evan's sphincter falls out and rolls away), there's a piece on how to shave, a list of bands that are better than the Lemonheads, and a piece on why David Janssen was more of a man than Evan Dando. You get the idea. And you know what? This silly thing got Sassy's Zine Of The Month and written up in Time magazine. Sheesh! (J.T.)

(1464 Easton Rd, Warrington PA 18976 \$1)

## DREAMWHIP

What is it about these guys and their road trips? Ah, the romantic wanderlust of the punk, the modern-day version of the antisocial hobo. I am dubbing this a "zenzine," it is pure artistry. Small in size, pen-and-ink shapes and drawings accompany a sort of surreal, stream-of-consciousness-style journal, and other tidbits and random thoughts. #1 kind of revolves around a road trip, #2 has lots of road imagery too. I really love this mostly because it's so different from everything else. (K.F.)  
(Dreamwhip #1 and #2 are available for \$1 each ppd., P.O. Box 53832, Lubbock, TX 79453.)

## EBBB! #4

This certainly isn't your typical punkzine - the editor has a nine year old daughter he's raising by himself, who makes guest appearances throughout the zine - but a lot of what goes into Ebb! is very punk indeed - dealing with homophobia, climbing in through a backstage window to see a GWAR show, hanging out with Jawbreaker, favorite show reviews, and so on. A labor of love, and it shows. And the next time I get to Chicago, I got look this guy up. (J.T.)  
(PO Box 397, Smoke IL 60076 \$1)

## EMPHASIS #1

Another journey to the straight edge way of knowledge, with lots of cool photos of SxE bands mooching it up, a couple of interviews, and a few rants from the editor. Despite the slogan "Don't be a butted, Go Vegan!" on the back cover, this doesn't have that obnoxious holier-than-thou attitude that a lot of straightedge zines have, and the photos are great. (J.T.)  
(Rick Seidman, 82 W Patricia Rd, Holland PA 18966 \$2)

## EXCITABLE UNDERWEAR #3

Any riot grrl that likes the Queers and Screaching Weasel as much as Robyn is okay in my book. There are interviews with some local bands, a Queers trip diary, some reviews, and some photos. Lots of fun. (J.T.)  
(PO Box 429115, Cincinnati OH 45242 \$2)

## FLYGIRL #5

Poetry, fiction, a chat with Kristin (of Simple Machines and Tsunami fame,) some reviews and a few badly



photocopied photos make up this zine. The charm here isn't in how well this is done, but that it manages to come out at all given the chaos that seems to surround the editor. Kind of like listening to Bratmobile. (J.T.) (Jai Agnish, 43 Morris Ave, W Milford NJ 07480 \$1)

## GENETIC DISORDER #10

This is a local San Diego music fanzine that cuts through the hype on all the bands around town, focusing on punk and hardcore sounds. Editor Larry Harmon tells it like it is; he doesn't kiss butt like the typical blind adoring fanzine (and to tell you the truth, I think he likes pissing people off). He rates the clubs and hangouts, too. My favorite articles are the tourist-style guides of San Diego County's scummiest suburbs (including crack-house locations and mass murder sites). Issue #10 has a Screeching Weasel interview and Larry tries to score a journalistic coup by getting to the bottom of the alleged Glenn Danzig-Def Leppard incident. Issue #11 should be out now, but I did not obtain it in time for this review. Genetic Disorder is available free in the San Diego area, but the articles and reviews are of interest (and very entertaining) no matter where you live, so order one up and tell Larry I sent you. (K.F.) (\$1.50 plus \$1 in stamps or cash for the postage. Or \$5 for 4 issues. Genetic Disorder, P.O. Box 151362, San Diego, CA 92175.)

## GREEDY BASTARD #9

Nothing Bill Florio says should ever be taken all that seriously, but I did chuckle throughout his interview with Chicago's straightedge/hardcore guru Tony Victory, who talks about his feud with Screeching Weasel and the international homo conspiracy against him. There's a tour diary, a lot of reviews, a lot of messy punk rock layouts, another interview with THD Records' Jason Parker, and so on. Funnier than a Bugout Society show, and you don't have to duck flying chopmeat. (J.T.) (PO Box 1014, Yonkers NY 10704 \$2)

## NO LONGER A FANZINE #4

My favorite part of this fat new issue was editor Joseph Gervasi's Cometbusesque tour diary, but there's lots more: an interview with Abe Rodriguez, punk rocker turned author; hate mail, comics, fiction, rants, think pieces on abortion, coming out, dealing with the handicapped, and as much nudity as The Probe. Get it. (J.T.) (142 Frankford Ave, Blackwood NJ 08012 \$2)

## NOISES FROM THE GARAGE #2

I met the editor at SXSW and we traded zines. This is a nice looking newsprint zine with a varied menu of interviews - everything from Tesco Vee and the Queers to Jad Fair and the Didjits. Really good review section too. (J.T.) (% Brian Marshall, Box 712, Lawrence KS 66044 \$2)

## PANIC BUTTON #8

There are two great features in this issue of Ben Weasel's zine and they both involve Ben. The first is his chat with Johnny Ramone about the great love they share (baseball, of course, although later they also talk about punk rock.) and the second is Ben's odyssey backstage at a soldout Nirvana concert, in which Mr. Weasel gets to rub elbows with Kurt Cobain and experience corporate rock superstardom firsthand. Plus there's other cool stuff, including reviews. (J.T.) (PO Box 62, Prospect Hts IL 60070 \$2)

## PEARL #1

There's a good interview with Undertow (uncredited photo by yours truly at ABC No Rio, by the way,) another with Adrienne of Spitboy about grrl things, reviews, fiction, and some photos that look like they were scanned into a Mac. Nice start. (J.T.) (Simone, Old Post Rd, RD 1 Box 12, Red Hook NY 12571 \$1)

## POWERBUNNY 4x4 #2

A nice looking new zine that covers the bustling New Brunswick scene and beyond. Reviews, comics, poetry, art, long interviews with Phish and Mr. Thumb. My only criticism is that if I'm going to read about new bands like Poole and Trampoline, I like to see what they look like, so maybe more photos next time? (J.T.) (9 Oxford St #2, New Brunswick NJ 08903 \$2)

## PUBLIC ENEMA

Without knowing what it was, I picked up this newspaper-style freebie at the health food market downstairs from my friend's apartment in Santa Monica. To my surprise, instead of tofu recipes, I found a literate and interesting zine focusing on the anarchist movement, or: "Deconstructing the myths of freedom in america." Skot, the editor, runs his own little anarchist faction, Kaos Revolution, and puts out this publication whenever he can. The issue of P.E. I found (Nov. '93 #6) featured Part 2 of Skot's diary of his bike trip up the coast of California, through Washington, Oregon, and onto the Anarchist Un-Convention in Vancouver, B.C. I would think that a new issue would be out by now, but I didn't receive it in time for this review. I found Public Enema a stimulating read; it made me think about lots of things I'd never questioned before and validated some things I had. There is a wonderful letters section with missives from friends and would-be cohorts from around the globe. (K.F.)

(Look for Public Enema free in or around the Los Angeles area, or write Public Enema/Kaos Revolution, 25686 Nugget, El Toro, CA 92630. It's \$1 for the zine and a couple of stamps for the Kaos Revolution info; why don't you send it all and ask for both?)

## SLEEPY FOOT #1

I've seen straight edge zines, Krishna zines, vegan zines, but this is the first Taoist zine I've come across. Editor Mike wants to publish anything you want to send him (except poetry) but this debut issue is mostly composed of short rants on different subjects, a few zine reviews, and a short story. (J.T.) (Mike Thain, 1636 E Main St #202, Kent OH 44240 50 cents)

## THE PROBE #3

Aaron is the craziest new face in zinedom since Rev. Norb. The Probe combines the usual punk rock stuff (diary-like live reviews, record reviews, an All You Can Eat tour diary of Japan, etc.) with photos of gals (and guys) in the buff. Tits and ass and punk rock, what more could you want. The mini-interviews with a whole bunch of indie labels in this issue are worth checking out too. The zine costs \$6 but it comes with a double 7". (J.T.) (c/o Aaron Muentz, PO Box 5068, Pleasanton CA 94566)

## RANDOM THOUGHTS OF PUNKNESS #6

I liked the style of this zine so much that I recruited its teenage editor to write for my fanzine. Anyone who can produce a cool DIY zine stuck in a nowhere little down in the Deep South is okay in my book. In this issue, editor Matt interviews One Nation Under, Johnny Entropy tells you how to build a bomb, some records get reviewed, and Matt tells you why it's punk to drive slow. (Reason 4: It's easier to flick people off and know that they saw you.) (J.T.) (Rte 2 Box 438, Leeds AL 35094)

## ROCK OUT CENSORSHIP

Far be it from me to say anything against a publication dedicated to fighting censorship. The news columns and editorials about free speech issues are all worthwhile. I just wish they could make this newspaper formatted thing look a little better, and go beyond the expected (interviews with Rage Against The Machine and the Genitorturers might make sense in a zine like this, but they're also really predictable and full of clichés that most of the people who read this will already agree with.) (J.T.) (PO Box 147, Jewett OH 43986)

## RAGE #2

Some poetry, a short story, and the editor's plans for beefing up this new zine comprise most of #2. The editor wants to use the magazine as a forum for people to rage against anything that bothers them and invites you to send in a Rage Page, in which you can rant all you want on any topic. The Rage Page in this issue is a moving account of a fan's feelings after hearing about the senseless drug-related death of River Phoenix. (J.T.) (Wisdom Gun Press, PO Box 1289, Lk Worth FL 33460 \$1)

## SATANIC TOASTERS/WHITE BREAD

ZINE One of those split zines where two editors pool their resources and share printing costs (makes sense!) This has everything from junk food reviews to a piece on class trips... The Satanic Toasters guy, Marc, publishes his journals (he's no Aaron Cometbus, let me tell you) while the editor of White Bread talks about masturbating to the beefcake boys and cheerleader girls on Saved By The Bell. And so on. (J.T.) (Brandon, RPO 4601, PO Box 5063, New Brunswick NJ 08903)

## SATISFACTION GUARANTEED #1

A tabloid newspaper format zine with lots of different stuff. This was apparently in the works for a while because there are old interviews with Hell No and Supertouch (who broke up over a year ago,) along with Sheer Terror, Yuppicide, and Atlas Shrugged. #2 has interviews with Gorilla Biscuits (who broke up years ago!), Bad Brains, Stick Figure, Mind Over Matter, and Sick Of It All, all from NY. NYC/HC could use a good zine of its own, there hasn't been one for a long time, so I hope this keeps going. (J.T.) \$1 (Michael Shaffer, 6 Oak Ct, Poughkeepsie NY 12603)

## SCRUFFY #1 & #2

A riot grrl zine, dedicated to female self image &



empowerment. There's not a lot to the first issue, but I liked the editorial that berated most teen magazines (like YM) for portraying their readers as airheads who only care about fashion and boys and "being popular." Issue 2 was great, from the riot girl manifestos to the review of Pete & Pete (my favorite Nickleodeon show.) Editor Alison even comes out and admits she loves Evan Dando. Keep it up! (J.T.)  
(Alison, 2520 Wandering Dr, Akron OH 44333 \$1)

## SHACKLED IN 3-D

A poetry zine from Greg Matherly, who also writes reviews for Jersey Beat. Actually, only the first half of the zine is poetry, the second half is a journal that reminded me of Jim Carroll's Basketball Diaries a little (portrait of a teenage fuckup.) (J.T.)  
(Useless Press, PO Box 413 Bristol TN 37621 \$2)

## SHOELACE #6

Erik Szantai and Bob Conrad's joint venture continues with Rancid and Half Japanese interviews, the usual introspective rants, reviews, and a good piece by Joseph Gervasi about his experience as a punk-rock pinup boy in Details magazine. (J.T.)  
(Box 7952, W Trenton NJ 08628 \$1.75)

## SPIFFY #4

Most of this is a perzine, focusing on Katherine's adventures as an intern at Matador (talk about day jobs from hell) and her high school play. For Internet fans, there's a transcription of a message string about Pavement that's typical of the nonsense that goes on in the cybernet. (J.T.)  
(Katherine Hodges, Box 1238, Ames IA 50014)

## SMITE #1

Another small zine (this one is 12 pages) which mostly seems to be the brain damaged musings of someone who watched way too much TV as a kid and can't talk about anything but Gilligans Island and Star Trek. (J.T.)  
(PO Box 624, Diboll TX 75941)

## SPOT #1

If you're looking for the recipe for a perfect egg cream, this is the place to look. Other stuff in this way punk mini zine (obviously written for young 'uns with Nintendo- damaged attention spans, since nothing is longer than a page) are a letter from Screeching Weasel's Danny Panic and some reviews (including reviews of where to buy CDs and hi fi gear if you happen to live near Berkeley Hts, NJ.) (J.T.)  
(195 Killamey Dr, Berkeley Hts NJ 07922 SASE)

## STAY FREE

This is published by WXYC radio at Chapel Hill and it's a pretty funny newspaper format zine with lots of good writing. The cover of the first issue I received has Beavis and Butthead (Beavis is wearing a "Kill Gina Arnold" t shirt, though) and inside it says "Serving the Militant Black Lesbian Community of Carrboro Since '92." No sacred cows here. Inside there's an interview with Gina Arnold about her book Route 666: The Road To Nirvana along with the best review of the book I've read anywhere. (The next issue had a frothing letter from Gerard Cosloy that viciously trashed Arnold and claimed that he was heavily misquoted in the book.) Plus lots of other stuff. (J.T.)  
(PO Box 7602, Chapel Hill NC 27514)

## STEVE ALBINI THINKS WE SUCK #1

Best new zine name for this issue goes to this gem, the idea being to refute the Albin-esque idea that anything someone doesn't like sucks. The problem is that my favorite part of this issue is the reprinted letter from Albin to the Chicago Tribute in which he trashes critic Greg Kot and three of 1993's rockcrit favorites (Liz Phair, Smashing Pumpkins, and Urge Overkill.) There's also a funny piece in which the editor "interviews" Greg Dulli of Afghan Whigs by making up questions and using snippets of lyrics as the answers. (J.T.)  
(Mo, 1651 Catalpa, Chicago IL 60640 SASE)

## SUBURBAN VOICE #33/34

Back after a long hiatus, this big double issue commemorates Al Quint's 10th (actually, since it was so delayed, 11th) anniversary by printing classic interviews from the zine's first decade (gee, why didn't I think of that for our 10th anniversary issue? It would have saved a lot of work!) Richard Hell, Necros, Dave Smalley, Tar, and SSD are some of the interviews, plus the usual excellent record reviews (new stuff, not old reviews,) and there's a 7" with Verbal Assault, Daltonic, and Al's old band Shattered Silence. (J.T.)  
(PO Box 2746, Lynn MA 01903 \$5)

## TAGGERZINE #5

With all the great bands coming out of San Diego these days, you'd think this zine would have better things to write about than a 14 thesis on extraterrestrial visiting earth and seeding the planet with livestock (i.e. us.) There's also some poetry and letters. (J.T.)  
(PO Box 632952, San Diego CA 92163 SASE)

## THORA-ZINE #4

Once just a lowly xeroxed punkzine, Thora-Zine has grown up into a big glossy color mag, with a lot of bold graphics, (over)ambitious layouts, and one-page pieces on major label rock and rap acts. This thing looks like it's in the throes of a major identity crisis - does it want to be Raygun, Interview, Seconds, or retain some vestige of its old punkzine spirit? Right now, it's hard to tell. (J.T.)  
(Box 571562, Houston TX 77257 \$3.50)

## TIDBIT #4

A pretty good new punkzine with lots of good photos and a more open minded attitude toward music than you find in a lot of hardcore zines. This issue has locals Blackspot, the Hanson Brothers, a piece on Revelation Records, some pages on Native American rights, and the editor's letter to Spin in response to their ridiculous Alternative Culture piece (which said something to the effect that fanzines were "for losers by losers.") The notion that the Spin writer might have been trying to be ironic apparently didn't occur to this loser, um, I mean fanzine editor. (J.T.)  
(Box 5846, Huntington Beach CA 92615 \$2)

## VISION ON #7

A nice mix of U.S. and UK punk always makes Vision On a good read, and the big, bold layouts and photos are easy on the eyes too. This issue has Bad Religion, Wat Tyler, Babes In Toyland, Black Train Jack, and the Holy Rollers, along with well written record reviews. (J.T.)  
(27 Springbank Croft, Holmfirth, W Yorkshire HD7

1L,W England \$3)

## WHAT? #1

A handwritten zine from Jersey Beat contributor Bob Byrne that focuses on the Chicago punk scene. Lots of live reviews (with Bob's acerbic commentary), movie and zine reviews, a thing on skinheads, an editorial urging fans to make flyers for shows. (J.T.)  
(Bob Byrne, 1326 Fredrick Ln, Naperville IL 60565 \$1.25)

## WHATEVER RAMBLINGS #12

Onetime Jersey Beat contributor/Princeton scene kid Alex is now doing the punk thing in Berkeley. This huge issue of WR lives up to the name of the zine: no interviews, no reviews, just pages and pages of cartoons, paste-up art, and scribbles from Alex's journal, plus a very naughty cartoon on the cover. (J.T.)  
(1947 MLK Jr Way #4, Berkeley CA 94704 \$2)

## WIGLET

The new Wiglet is here! The new Wiglet is here! Issue #10 (March '93) just arrived in my mailbox. I mostly send in for girl produced personal zines like these, but this one was my first, a couple of years ago when I first discovered there were people out there baring their souls and putting it out for all the world to see. So Wiglet's my sentimental all-time favorite. The author and artist, Gilmore Tammy, lives in Ohio and basically tells you what's up in her life, what's on her mind lately, etc., etc. She's a good writer and has good taste in music. Her comic drawings creepy and funny. This issue has thoughts about pornography (no photos, guys), an experiment in drunkenness, and a song to sing (complete with chords). I like this zine and the feeling that you're not alone in the world, of really getting to know someone and all their ugly and funny thoughts. Especially when you say, "Me too!" while reading it. If #9 is still available, get that one, too, it was a classic. (K.F.)  
(Wiglet is \$2 plus 2 stamps. Send to Gilmore Tammy, P.O. Box 8072, Columbus, OH 43201.)

## ZUM #7

Another Jersey Beat contributor, this one off to college in Berkeley but still doing his own zine (God, where do these kids find the energy?) This big fat issue rambles all over the place - interviews with Superchunk, Uncle Tupelo, Seam, J Church, Shadowy Men, plus "lots of other things" as it says on the cover, by George and his sister/co-editor Yvonne. (J.T.)  
(George Chen, 1601 Spruce St, Berkeley CA 94709 \$2)

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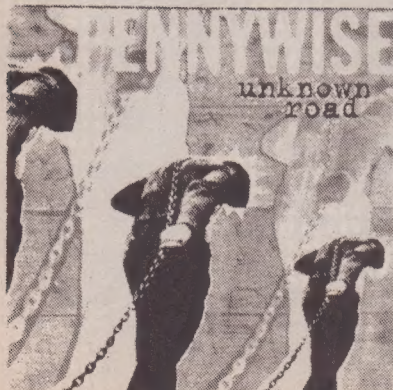
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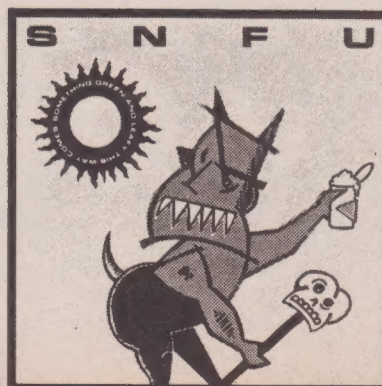
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